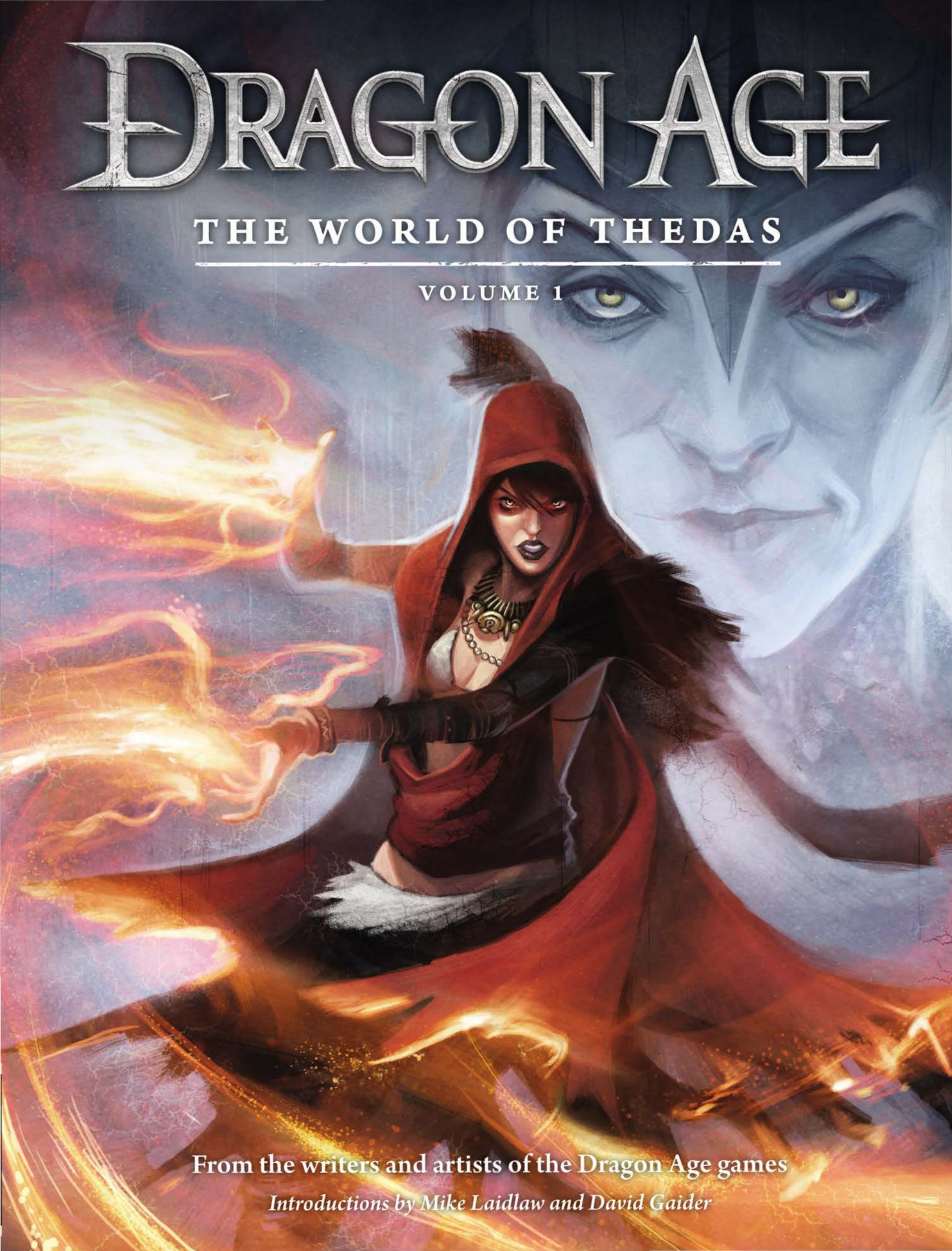
DRAGON AGE

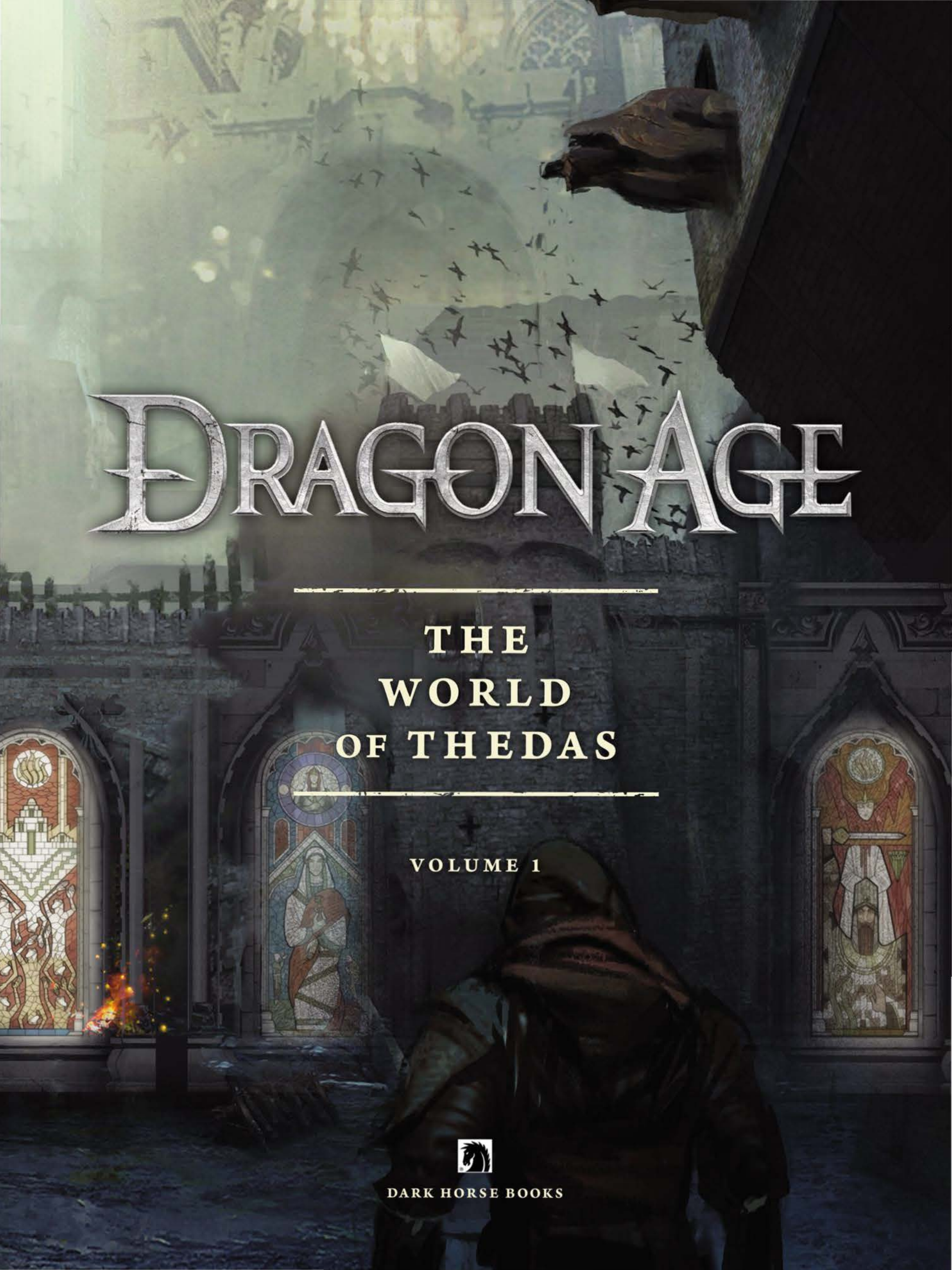
THE WORLD OF THEDAS

VOLUME 1



From the writers and artists of the Dragon Age games

Introductions by Mike Laidlaw and David Gaider



DRAGON AGE

THE WORLD OF THEDAS

VOLUME 1

DARK HORSE BOOKS

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Special Thanks
We mined lore that went back more than eight years to build this book and it is impossible to credit everyone who may have had a hand in its content. With this in mind, we thank the *Dragon Age* team past and present for their hard work developing this rich world. Particular thanks are due to editor Karin Weekes and former editors Dan Lazin and Chris Corfe, as their initial work collecting *Dragon Age* lore was the genesis of this project.

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BIRTH OF THE DRAGON AGE

I honestly forget when James Ohlen, the original lead designer for *Dragon Age: Origins*, first came to discuss building a setting for BioWare's new fantasy game. At that point, it was still a very vague concept . . . and the years that followed were such a blur as we tried to figure out what kind of game we were making. It all seems like ancient history. I remember the parameters I was given: a traditional fantasy world, complete with wizards and dwarves and elves and all the things one expects out of fantasy. I remember sitting there, doodling maps and feeling very strange about the entire process.

I mean, making your own fantasy setting is something every game master worth their salt does at one point or another, isn't it? You don't have to worry about someone else's baggage affecting your campaign, or be concerned that your players might know more about the setting than you do. You get to start from scratch, mixing the elements you like most into your flavor of fantasy world. The real question was: what would those elements be? Outside of the parameters I was given, and the necessity of this being a setting for a game that you can play in and not just read about, I wasn't sure. This wasn't some homebrew campaign, but something millions of people would experience. Who does this sort of thing as part of their job? It seemed a little surreal.

What I eventually settled on was a setting grounded in realism: "What if our own history had magic and elves and dwarves?" It's not really our own world, obviously, but I wondered how people would realistically cope with neighbors who could cast spells and summon demons. How would they react to people who were inhuman? How might Christianity be different if, instead of Jesus, it had been founded by Joan of Arc? What would it mean to have fantasy religions where gods were not known entities who provided spells to believers, but instead required faith in their existence? I wanted to subvert some of the common fantasy tropes while still keeping the conventions recognizable—elves who had been brought low rather than remaining aloof and immortal; dwarves who were conniving political schemers rather than stouthearted Scotsmen; mages who were feared for good reason.

And the best part? Everyone on the team was on board with the idea. Discussions led to the creation of the Qunari and the Blight. The nation of Ferelden as the location for the first game appeared, and concept art started to bring to life what had previously only been scribbles on paper. What tabletop world builder gets that? Seeing Thedas evolve from where it began and becoming a real thing, until it finally went out to the fans and was embraced wholeheartedly by so many, has been the highlight of my career.

I look forward to seeing where we take it next.

—David Gaider, Lead Writer

THE EVOLVING WORLD OF THEDAS

The book in your hands covers a huge swath of the *Dragon Age* world. Races, politics, nations, it's all here: ruthlessly fact checked, beautifully illustrated, and artfully arranged.

Every section contains all-new content that explores and expands upon the world of Thedas. Most of the amazing art pieces have never been released before this. Also included are many narrative sidebars written specifically for this compendium by our writing team. Some shine lights on unexplored corners of the world's rich history. A few hide hints about the future of *Dragon Age*. Which? Well, that would be telling.

Suffice it to say that we've long held that *Dragon Age* is not a world coming to an end. There are more stories to tell and more places to visit. The team has very consciously seeded the world so that we have a vast array of intriguing locations at our disposal when deciding where to set a new comic series, novel, or game. There is a larger-scale plan for how the world will evolve, but we always want it to be growing, not coming to a conclusion. This book, then, with its tantalizing new information, is just another step on that journey. Thanks for coming with us.

Ben and Nick here at BioWare, along with the incredibly talented folks at Dark Horse, have created something very special. I sincerely hope you enjoy this deep dive into the world of Thedas as much as I've enjoyed watching it come together.

—Mike Laidlaw, Creative Director

LEGEND

MAJOR POWERS

Chantry: The dominant religious institution in Thedas spreads the word of the Maker and influences nearly every human nation on the continent.

Elves: This once-great people have been relegated to the fringes of human society.

Dwarves: A stout race of builders, the dwarves reign over a sizable portion of the underground.

Qunari: The Qunari are followers of a religious text espousing absolute discipline known as the Qun.

Orlais: The lavish Orlesian Empire is a thriving nation of Chantry faithful.

Tevinter Imperium: The once-mighty Imperium is the only mage-led nation in Thedas.

Ferelden: This relatively young nation with barbarian roots is the birthplace of Chantry prophet Andraste.

Antiva: The cultured kingdom of Antiva is famous for its wine, sailing tradition, and rich merchant history.

Rivain: The laws of the Qun meet tribal superstition in this human land where Chantry faithful are the minority.

Kirkwall: The city-state of Kirkwall is among the most powerful—and contested—in the Free Marches.

Starkhaven: The kingdom of Starkhaven is the largest city-state in the Free Marches.

Nevarra: Nevarra is a small but thriving nation in central Thedas, known for its art, tombs, and strong military tradition.

The Anderfels: In the bleak and blighted Anderfels, dying is easier than living.

Grey Wardens: The Wardens are an order dedicated to protecting Thedas from the Blight above all costs.

Circle of Magi: The Circle is an association of mages, connected to the Chantry, that teaches and enforces the responsible use of magic.

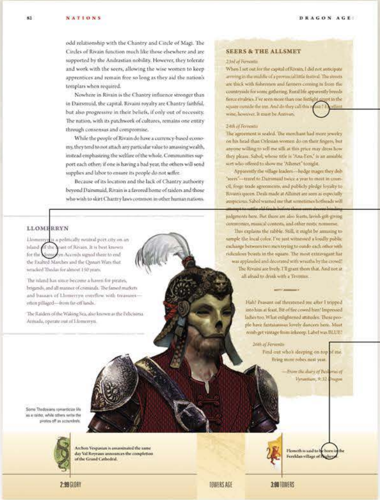
Templars: The Templar Order is charged with controlling mages and magic use.

Seekers: An elite, authoritative arm of the Chantry, the Seekers of Truth investigate threats to Chantry order.

MAJOR EVENTS

Exalted March: A Chantry-led campaign to stop any significant threat to Thedas, especially the authority of the Maker.

Blight: An Archdemon leads a scourge of darkspawn to the surface, threatening to destroy all life in Thedas.



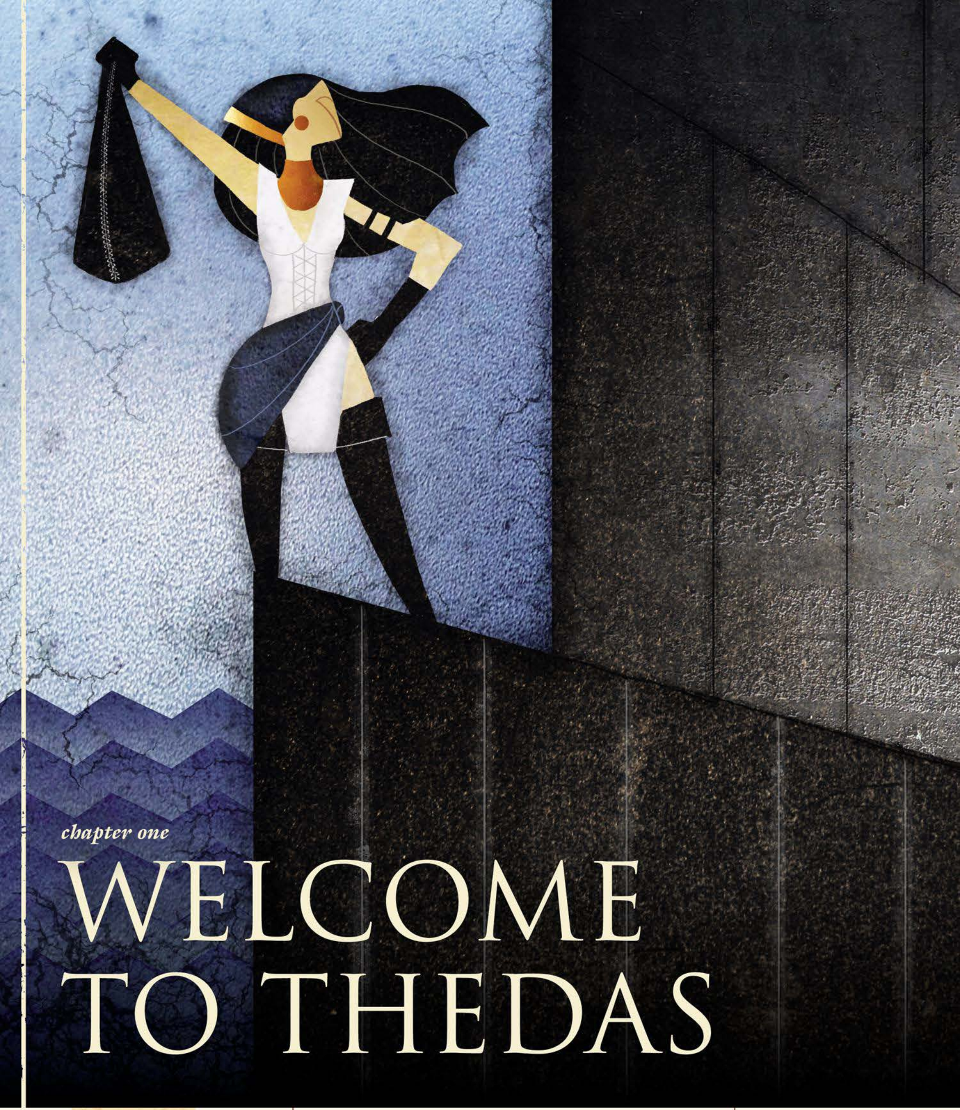
Narrative sidebars appear throughout the volume, each offering a unique perspective on *Dragon Age* lore.

Though written in-world, the volume's main text is in one, objective voice. Portions of the text are spotlighted for readers who prefer to browse.

A detailed timeline of important events in Thedosian history runs the length of the book.

The Donarks
Qundalon
Colean Sea
Seheron
Sundarin
Tallo's Eye
The Weathered Pass
The Wandering Hills
Feral Fjords
Tallo
Alam
Ventosus Straits
The High Reaches
Valarian Fields
Minrathous
Eyes of Noge
Kassel
Nocen Sea
Volca Sea
Anderfels
The Lattenfluss
Carastes
Laysh
Hossberg
Asariel
Marnas Pell
Neromenian
The Imperial Hwy
The Merdaine
Vol Dorma
Nordbotten
Vyrantium
Weisshaupt
Tevinter Imperium
The Imperial Hwy
Hunterhorn Mountains
Kal-Sharok
Solas
Nessum
Caimen Brea
The Silent Plains
Trevis
Hasmal
Perendale
The Blasted Hills
Nevarra
Andoral's Reach
Hunter Fell
Nevarra
Churneau
Ghislain
Fields of Ghislain
The Tirashan
Arlesans
The Imperial Hwy
Montfort
Cumberland
Nahashin Marshes
Val Chevin
Waking Sea
Urthemiel Plateau
The Imperial Hwy
Val Royeaux
Jader
Orlais
Orzammar
Val Foret
Halamshiral
The Sea of Ash
The Western Approach
The Heartlands
Lydes
The Imperial Hwy
Verchiel
Malcellin Geysers
The Abyssal Reach
Lake Celestine
Frostback Mountains
The Sulfur Lakes
Montsimmard
The Dales
Haven
Gamordan Peaks
Val Firmin
Sulfur Point
Deauvin Flats
The Arbor Wilds
Mont-de-glace
Sundered Sea
Uncharted Territories

Boeric Ocean
Par Vollen
Qunandar
The Northern Passage
Seheron
Seere
Kont-aar
Venefication Sea
Rivain
The White Spire
Qarinus
Arlathan Forest
Brynnlaw
Ayesleigh
Afsaana
Dairsmuid
Treviso
The Drylands
Rialto Bay
Antiva
Antiva City
Seleny
The Hundred Pillars
Rialto
The Weyrs
Salle
Llomerryn
Green Dales
Bastion
Ansburg
Wycome
Minanter River
Tantervale
Starkhaven
Free Marches
Estwatch
Hercinia
Amaranthine Ocean
Markham
Vimmark Mountains
Ostwick
Brandel's Reach
Kirkwall
Alamar
Highever
Amaranthine
The Coastlands
West Hill
The North Road
Hafter River
Lake Calenhad Docks
The Bannorn
Denerim
The Circle Tower
Dragon's Peak
Drakon River
River Dane
Ferelden
Brecilian Forest
South Reach
The West Road
Lothering
Southron Hills
The Imperial Hwy
Redcliffe
The Hinterlands
Ostagar
Brecilian Passage
Gwaren
The Frozen Seas
Korcari Wilds
Uncharted Territories



chapter one

WELCOME TO THEDAS

Arlathan is founded some three thousand years before the arrival of humans on the continent. The date is so far removed from recorded history that it is difficult to pinpoint in Chantry years.

The elves are believed to first make contact with the dwarves.

ANCIENT ERA

1 FA

-4600 ANCIENT

FROSTY PEAKS IN THE HUNTERHORNS. Tangled jungles on Par Vollen. The marvelous tunnels of dwarven construction known as the Deep Roads. From these distant edges of Thedas to the center of Chantry power in Val Royeaux, blood has spilled.

Thedas is a continent in turmoil.

To truly understand the world, you must look to its troubled people: the hard choices they have made, the nations they have built, and the bloody legacies they leave behind.

When there isn't a would-be empire threatening war, there's the darkspawn scourge roaring to the surface, threatening to kill everyone, borders be damned. Then there's magic. Mages might not be able to choose their gift, but every nation has ways to deal with it. Some celebrate and foster magic as a skill. Most violently suppress its use and dominate its users.

Over the course of history, humans have warred with elves, the Qunari, and each other. These myriad conflicts have shaped territories and generations of intolerance and oppression, while religion, be it belief in the Maker, the Qun, or any number of pantheons, elevated some societies to power and left others in ashes.

Records claim humanity arrives in Thedas around this date. This is disputed by scholars, who ask where humanity came from and why they left.

-3100 ANCIENT

Elves are said to first notice the quickening, ending their immortality and frightening them into withdrawal from human contact. This is thought by many to be mere legend.

-2850 ANCIENT

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THEDAS

The earliest known points of Thedosian history are documented in partial texts and old stories that only hint at the reality of these ancient times. Dalish keepers and the dwarven Shaperate speak of a Thedas entirely devoid of humans, a time when elves reigned over the land, and dwarves ruled the underground.

When humans came, everything is said to have changed. What peace may or may not have existed gave way to all-out war, and humans nearly destroyed the elves with the rise of the Tevinter Imperium. This first human empire and its worship of the Old Gods spread across Thedas. The elves either fled to the far reaches of the continent or were enslaved.

The might of the Tevinter magocracy was unquestioned for generations—until the Blight. Prevailing knowledge teaches that the unchecked power of the Tevinter magisters—specifically, their attempt to touch the realm of the gods—triggered this threat to all living things. This sin corrupted the magisters who entered the Fade, returning them to the waking world as the first darkspawn. The Old Gods they met in the Fade were likewise cast out and locked away underground.

Over the course of human history, five Blights have threatened to destroy Thedas.

The darkspawn, twisted creatures of singular purpose, sought to unearth the trapped Old Gods. The first to wake was Dumat, who took the form of a blighted high dragon known as an Archdemon. He led the darkspawn to the surface, taking an unspeakable toll on the dwarves before terrorizing the humans and elves. Dumat brought humanity to the brink of destruction before a newly formed order known as the Grey Wardens managed to defeat the Archdemon and end his Blight.

The First Blight lasted one hundred years, greatly weakening the Imperium. When the prophet Andraste led an army of barbarians to attack from the south, the Imperium no longer had the strength to defend itself. Andraste proclaimed that magic must serve humanity rather than rule over it, a direct challenge to the Tevinter way of life. Railing against the Imperial magisters, Andraste called the Old Gods lies and blamed their worship for the Blight. Her teachings spread quickly, and much of the Imperium crumbled before her armies. When Andraste burned at the stake, her martyrdom only fueled faith in her Cult of the Maker.

At the start of the Divine Age, another Old God awoke and a Second Blight began. Emperor Drakon, of the new nation of Orlais, became humanity's defender. As he pushed back the darkspawn hordes with his armies, his own power grew, and with it, the influence of the Chantry he created in the name of Andraste.

The Old Gods are said to begin whispering to humanity from the Black City. They teach the Dreamers of the Neromenian tribes magic. Power shifts, and these Dreamers become both priests and kings among their people.

-2800 ANCIENT

The Alamarri tribes cross the Frostback Mountains and settle in the lands that will eventually become Ferelden. Alamarri legend says they were fleeing a "shadow goddess," but scholars believe they were escaping a natural disaster.

-2415 ANCIENT

Drakon enlisted mages, who eventually formed the Circle of Magi. They harnessed their magic to smite the darkspawn, and, alongside the Grey Wardens, killed the Archdemon. The Second Blight was over.

It was during these troubled times that the influence of the Chantry spread and solidified across much of Thedas. The religious body, which preached Andraste's Chant of Light and worship of the Maker, became so powerful that even the Imperium converted—although they would later split to form the Imperial Chantry over differing interpretations of magic's role in society.

Over the ages, three more Blights ignited and threatened the surface world, only to be stopped with aid from the Wardens. In between Blights, the Schism between the Chantry and the Imperial Chantry led to a series of conflicts between Orlais and the Imperium. Their warring accomplished little for either

HISTORY OF THE EXALTED MARCHES

An Exalted March is a call to arms declared by the ruling Divine. It is named for Andraste's Exalted March on Tevinter. Although Chantry faithful have not historically been forced to fight, there has been significant pressure to join past marches, for fear of otherwise being branded a traitor to the faith.

EXALTED MARCH OF THE DALES

2:10–2:20 Glory

The Exalted March of the Dales began in 2:10 Glory after the elves of the Dales captured the Orlesian city of Montsimmard and marched on Val Royeaux. The Chantry called for war against the elves. It became known as the Exalted March of the Dales. Orlais was the only nation to provide troops.

Despite considerable elven victories, the elven capital of Halamshiral was conquered and the Dales were crushed. The Orlesians uprooted elven settlements and forced the elves into human settlements or a nomadic life. The elven nomads came to be known as the Dalish.

EXALTED MARCH ON STARKHAVEN

2:80 Glory

In 2:15 Glory, Starkhaven's King Fyruss, with backing from Tevinter allies, attempted to invade the rest of the Free Marches. Fyruss failed to conquer any neighboring city-states, despite launching multiple campaigns over several decades.

Eventually, the Imperium took matters into its own hands, removing Fyruss from power and taking Starkhaven for itself. Suddenly, Starkhaven was everyone's problem. The Chantry called an Exalted March in 2:80 Glory to free Starkhaven from its Tevinter invaders, and Starkhaven regained its independence following a short but bloody battle.

EXALTED MARCHES ON THE TEVINTER IMPERIUM

4:40 Black–5:10 Exalted

In all, four Exalted Marches were called on the Imperium. The Chantry was so focused on the marches that they named an entire age after them. In 4:40 Black, the Chantry called the first march to combat the magic-friendly nation's perceived heathenism. Over many years and three more marches, Chantry-backed forces made it well into Imperium land. But they fell short of conquering the seemingly impregnable capital of Minrathous. In the end, the marches did little more than solidify the ideological divide between the two nations.

The Exalted Marches on the Imperium ended with the beginning of the Fourth Blight.

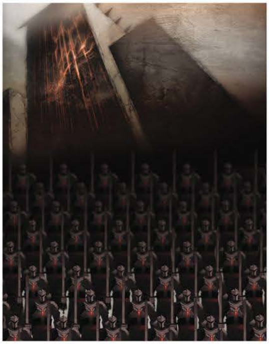
THE NEW EXALTED MARCHES

7:25–7:84 Storm

This series of three marches on the Qunari began after they landed in Thedas and swept across the continent in a bid for expansion of borders and influence. The period was significant in that it saw the many nations of Thedas, including the Imperium, working together to repel a common threat that wasn't a Blight. The Imperial Chantry dispatched troops to retake Seheron, while Andrastian Chantry forces focused on freeing Rivain.

The second march was called in 7:52 Storm and ended in disaster. Chantry forces were pushed back and the Qunari captured most of Antiva.

The Qunari weren't finished. They sailed south on the Amaranthine to Ostwick. "Their plan was to overwhelm the Marcher cities of Starkhaven and Kirkwall, Starkhaven to block the roads leading north, and Kirkwall to block ships on the Waking Sea coming from Orlais, all in an effort to deny supplies to the Thedas armies assaulting Rivain," Brother Ferdinand Genitivi wrote. "The attack on Starkhaven eventually failed, but Kirkwall was attacked in a daring night raid where the Qunari used their leashed saarebas mages in an unprecedented display of sorcery. The walls were torn down and the city was taken, and for the next four years, Kirkwall endured the most brutal occupation in its history."



During Exalted Marches, an indomitable force assembles to put down threats to Chantry order.

A third Exalted March was called, and a contingent led by an Orlesian chevalier named Ser Michel Lafaille forced the Qunari out of Kirkwall. The march pushed on and the war turned in favor of the ruling Thedosians. By 7:84 Storm, the third New Exalted March on the Qunari ended. The Qunari maintained only one stronghold on the continent (the city of Kont-aar in Rivain), but the cost of dislodging them was high. Much of northern Thedas was laid waste. The Llomerryn Accords were signed between the Qunari and every nation except Tevinter, ushering in an uneasy peace.

The Alamarri living near Lake Calenhad break away, becoming the Avvar. The two groups war with each other for centuries.

-1815 ANCIENT

The Neromenian tribes split to form four kingdoms: Tevinter, Neromenian, Barindur, and Qarinus.

-1700 ANCIENT

power, and was put aside with the landing of a mysterious new race who called themselves the Qunari.

The horned giants, who follow a strange set of rigid ideals, sought to convert Thedas to their way of life. They possessed superior technology, and in a great war, cut into the heart of Thedas. Together, the human nations of Thedas pushed the Qunari back to the continent's fringes, forcing a fragile peace between the Chantry and the Qunari that has persisted for two ages. Only the Imperium would not relent, and tensions with the Qunari persist there.

By the time the Fifth Blight struck in the early years of the Dragon Age, it had been generations since Thedas faced an Archdemon. The Warden ranks were considerably thinner as respect waned. Somehow, two young Wardens and a united Ferelden beat impossible odds to kill the new Archdemon and stop the Fifth Blight from spreading across the continent.

In the Free Marches and Orlais, meanwhile, tensions between the Circle of Magi and the Chantry arm of authority known as the templars were coming to a head. Shortly after the end of the Fifth Blight, an apostate mage destroyed a Chantry temple in Kirkwall. Further unrest in the Orlesian capital of Val Royeaux led to a battle in the city's Circle between templars and high-ranking mages. When it was revealed that the Divine, head of the Chantry, had all but supported the mages in this conflict, many templars and Seekers severed ties with the Chantry, spelling an uncertain future for all.

The entire Kingdom of Barindur vanishes under unknown circumstances.

-1610 ANCIENT

Thalsian, also known as the First Priest of Dumat, is the first known person to wield blood magic. He claims to learn the art after personally communicating with Dumat, an Old God.

-1595 ANCIENT

The Chasind people break off from the Alamarri and settle in the Korcari Wilds.

-1415 ANCIENT

This only scrapes the surface of the continent's long, storied history. For a more detailed account, see the timeline of events that runs the length of this book.

GEOGRAPHY & CLIMATE

Thedas is a vibrant, diverse land of arid desolation, verdant forests, and frigid mountain ranges. Often climate and geography vary widely over short distances. The volatile, volcanic marshland of the Nahashin Marshes in western Orlais, for instance, could not bear less similarity to the fertile Heartlands some three days east.

Cutting through the middle of the continent is the Waking Sea, a busy waterway lined with some of the continent's biggest cities, including Val Royeaux, Cumberland, and Kirkwall. The sea connects to the mighty Amaranthine Ocean, so massive and turbulent only the bravest dare venture far off the coast.

In the southern regions, temperature changes grow most extreme, as heavy precipitation spells severe rains, and, in Ferelden especially, harsh winters. By contrast, heat reigns in the north. This is most pronounced in the driest steppes of the Anderfels. The inhospitable region offers little more than oppressive heat and blowing dust.

That which might lie beyond the known world is of great interest to scholars. Few people have explored and fewer have documented the northern reaches—islands like Seheron and Par Vollen, and the impenetrable jungles of the Donarks. What lies still further north, and indeed, across the Amaranthine, is anyone's guess. The Qunari, relatively new to Thedas and perhaps the only race with the means to travel so far, actively suppress any knowledge of where they came from and why they left.

Fereldans are accustomed to unpredictable and often miserable weather.

The kingdoms of Neromenian and Tevinter unite after Darinius, High King of Neromenian, takes control of the Tevinter throne.

-1207 ANCIENT

Dwarven gladiatorial contests known as Provings become popular among the nobles of the Imperium. A Grand Proving arena is constructed in Minrathous.

-1200 ANCIENT

TROUBLES OF A CHANTRY SCHOLAR

As students of culture, it is important to always recognize your biases. I wear my Chantry perspective openly, for if my readers do not understand the lens through which I view the world, they cannot account for how these biases may color my writing.

Gathering accurate information is challenging in a place as vast and fragmented as Thedas. One man may go on at length about lurid dealings with a king, then refuse to provide his name or some proof of the account. Other sources may conflict wildly. Fixing travel to some of the more remote areas of the continent is nothing compared to the difficulty I've had finding contacts I can trust. I cannot tell you how many times "reputable people" have tried to deceive me, sometimes for personal notoriety, more often in the interest of a pet cause. Trustworthy Qunari, Dalish, and Tevinter contacts are especially scarce and I prize those I have kept friendly. Often it is I who must earn their trust.

Texts too can be unreliable. From extensive readings, I have determined that Andraste was a Fereldan Orlesian who was born in every town from here to Hossberg. What little remains of elven history has been told and retold, shifted and skewed, until the tales are unrecognizable. I have particular respect for the dwarves, for there is no other people so obsessed with recording an accurate and complete history. If only the Shapers were as open as the skies they fear.

If I can be honest, the long reign of the Chantry has made the recording of reality at times a trial. Most common histories have been rewritten through the filter of my religion. Everything has meaning as it pertains to the Maker. And while this is unavoidable, it sometimes leads to conflicts between what is officially taught by the Chantry and what I have seen with my own eyes.

While my belief in the Maker is absolute, only a fool would ignore the lessons to be learned from other societies and religions.

Take the Fade. Was it the kingdom of the Maker, as common knowledge dictates, or the realm of the Tevinter Old Gods? Few people would contest its existence, but beyond that, there is little agreement among scholars. Though there are many who would disagree with me, I have come to believe nothing is for certain. I've met too many people and encountered too many perspectives not to keep an open mind about these things.

—*Excerpt from a lecture by Brother Genitivi at the University of Orlais, delivered shortly after the release of his seminal work,* In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar

The intricate underground architecture of Orzammar is a wonder of dwarven engineering.

SELECTIONS FROM THE BOTANICAL COMPENDIUM

Deep Mushroom

"Deep mushroom" refers to the entire group of fungi that grow underground in caves and many parts of the dwarven Deep Roads. Collection can be a dangerous task, as the Deep Roads are often infested with darkspawn. Because of this, dwarven merchants often recruit casteless hirelings for the job, and pay them a meager percentage of what they earn selling the mushrooms to surfacers.

The most common varieties used in the herbalist's trade are the blightcap, ghoul's mushroom, and brimstone mushroom, almost all of which tend to carry the darkspawn's corruption. While they cannot transmit the disease, this trait often makes them quite poisonous. Only experienced herbalists should handle deep mushrooms, and no one should consume them without adequate cleaning and preparation. Careless consumption can cause insanity, severe abdominal cramping, and even death.

Elfroot

The elves of Arlathan first used elfroot, hence the name. The root gave their medicines particular efficacy, so when the Imperium conquered the elves, the magisters adopted its use, and its popularity spread to all corners of the empire.

Elfroot is a hardy plant with large green leaves that grows wild in many places. It's so common that it tends to appear in most gardens and fields like a weed. Unlike a weed, however, most people appreciate having access to the wonderful little plant. The roots can be used with little preparation. Rubbing some of the juice on a wound, for example, will speed up healing and numb pain. And chewing on a slice of root treats minor ailments like indigestion, flatulence, and sore throat.

There are several varieties, but the most useful for herbalists are the bitter, gossamer, and royal elfroots.

Deathroot

Deathroot has been used in magic and potion making for centuries. It's a fragile-looking plant with a thin stalk and purple flowers, which fruits once a year, developing bright red, fleshy pods that cause disorientation and dizziness if ingested.

There are two varieties. Archon Hadrianus first found the more common arcanist deathroot when he discovered it growing on several dead slaves. The other, lunatic's deathroot, is most closely associated with the story of the courtesan Melusine, who sought revenge on a powerful magister and his family. She harvested the plant, baked it into small pies, and presented them to the magister at a banquet. Terrifying hallucinations seized the guests after they ate the pies, and they tore each other to pieces.

—*Excerpts from* The Botanical Compendium,
by Ines Arancia, botanist

Tevinter allies itself with the dwarves.

-1200 ANCIENT

Darinius unites Tevinter and Qarinus, forming the mighty Tevinter Imperium. He declares himself the first Archon.

-1195 ANCIENT

The cold can kill in higher elevations.

MOUNTAIN GUIDE TO THEDAS

Frostback Mountains: The treacherous Frostbacks run from the Korcari Wilds of southern Ferelden to the banks of the Waking Sea. They are home to the robust human tribe known as the Avvar, and, beneath the range's northern foothills, most of the continent's dwarves. The entrance to the dwarven city of Orzammar lies in Gherlen's Pass, the only Frostback passage safe for year-round travel.

Hunterhorn Mountains: The massive Hunterhorn Mountains stretch across southwestern Thedas like crooked fingers. The largest mountain range in Thedas holds some of the continent's tallest peaks, including its highest: Mt. Ambrosia. In the southern reaches lie the Gamordan Peaks, which cradle the Abyssal Reach, and on its edge, the Warden fortress Adamant.

Vimmark Mountains: The Vimmarks are a steep range that runs along the northern shore of the Waking Sea in the Free Marches. At the foot of the range sit the city-states of Kirkwall and Markham, as well as the Planasene Forest. Noteworthy landmarks include a span of jagged water-side cliffs known as the Wounded Coast, as well as Sundermount, said to be the site of the final battle between the elven empire and the Tevinter Imperium. A massive Grey Warden prison that once held the ancient darkspawn known as Corypheus is embedded in these mountains.

TIME & CALENDARS

CHANTRY CALENDAR

The Chantry calendar is the most common in Thedas. Its first year honors the appointment of the Chantry's original head, Divine Justinia I. Unlike other calendars, the Chantry marks time by ages, each a hundred years long. At the end of each age, Chantry scholars name the next. To do this, they look to the current state of Thedas and watch for signs from the Maker to help predict what will come.

Currently Thedas is in the ninth age of the Chantry calendar, known as the Dragon Age. It was predicted to be a time of great destruction and upheaval. To say this prediction was accurate has proven an understatement.

Anything prior to 1:1 Divine is known as the Ancient Era, and the years, counting backward, are designated with negative numbers.

King Endrin Stonehammer moves the dwarven capital from Kal-Sharok to the growing thaig of Orzammar.

-1170 ANCIENT

Endrin Stonehammer oversees the construction of the legendary Stonehammer Hall in Orzammar.

-1170 ANCIENT

The immortal Xenon the Antiquarian has seen more ages come and go than anyone in Thedas. The years have not been kind to his body.

The Orzammar Proving Grounds are expanded to encompass Grand Provings, previously held in Kal-Sharok. The best warriors of these Provings become the first of Orzammar's Paragons. Stonehammer builds a hall to house huge statues in their honor.

-1170 ANCIENT

Taxes drained by Orzammar from Kal-Sharok's trade profits begin to grow burdensome.

-1160 ANCIENT

Endrin Stonehammer is made a Paragon.

-1131 ANCIENT

AGES

There have been nine ages since the formation of the Chantry:

Divine Age (1:1–1:99): Named to celebrate the reign of the first Divine.

Glory Age (2:1–2:99): Named for predictions of a grand rebirth after the devastation of the First Blight.

Towers Age (3:1–3:99): Named upon the completion in 2:99 Glory of the Grand Cathedral in Val Royeaux, its towers visible from miles around.

Black Age (4:1–4:99): Named as the Chantry called for retribution against the "Black Divine," installed by the Tevinter Imperium to rule its Imperial Chantry following the Schism.

Exalted Age (5:1–5:99): Named during a period of near-constant war with the Tevinter Imperium that included multiple Exalted Marches.

Steel Age (6:1–6:99): Named after Queen Madrigal of Antiva was assassinated during a hunt. She was found with four steel swords in her chest.

Storm Age (7:1–7:99): Named as war with the Qunari raged. The leaders of Thedas called for a great storm of violence to expel the invaders.

Blessed Age (8:1–8:99): Named by the Chantry as an age of bounty and prosperity.

Dragon Age (9:1–present): Named after the reappearance of dragons, long thought extinct.

MONTHS

The current twelve months and four seasons that define a year are rooted in the early years of the Tevinter Imperium. Except for the addition of Chantry holidays after the Second Blight, the months and primary seasonal holidays remain unchanged after more than two thousand years.

Each thirty-day month has a low name, largely used among the common classes, as well as an official high name. Only courts and scholars use the months' alternate names, based on the original Tevinter. The high names are included below in parentheses.

1 **Wintermarch** (Verimensis)

2 **Guardian** (Pluitanis)

3 **Drakonis** (Nubulis)

4 **Cloudreach** (Eluviesta)

5 **Bloomingtide** (Molioris)

6 **Justinian** (Ferventis)

7 **Solace** (Solis)

8 **August** (Matrinalis)

9 **Kingsway** (Parvulis)

10 **Harvestmere** (Frumentum)

11 **Firstfall** (Umbralis)

12 **Haring** (Cassus)

HOLIDAYS

The majority of Thedas, from Tevinter to Ferelden, celebrates five major holidays, each tied to the transition of a season or the beginning of a new year.

First Day: The traditional start of the year, this holiday involves visits to neighbors and family (in remote areas, this was once an annual check to ensure everyone was alive), as well as a town gathering to commemorate the year past, accompanied by drinking and merriment.

Wintersend: Once called "Urthalis" and dedicated to Urthemiel, the Old God of Beauty, this holiday has now become a celebration of the Maker. It stands for the end of winter in many lands and coincides with tourneys and contests at the Proving Grounds in Minrathous. In southern lands, this holiday has become a day of gathering for trade, theater, and, in some areas, the arrangement of marriages. It is celebrated at the beginning of Pluitanis.

Summerday: Once called "Andoralis" and dedicated to Andoral, the Old God of Unity, this holiday is universally celebrated as the beginning of summer, a time for joy and, commonly, marriage. Boys and girls ready to come of age don white tunics and gowns. They then join a grand procession that crosses the settlement to the local Chantry, where they are taught the responsibilities of adulthood. Summerday is a particularly holy occasion in Orlais. It is celebrated at the beginning of Molioris.

Funalis: This holiday was once dedicated to the Old God of Silence, Dumat. However, since Dumat's rise during the First Blight, Thedosians turn a blind eye to any old ties between the day and the dragon. The holiday is now known across Thedas as All Soul's Day and spent in somber remembrance of the dead. In some northern lands, the people dress as spirits and walk the streets in parade after midnight. The Chantry uses the holiday to remember the death of Andraste, with public fires that mark her immolation and plays that depict her death. It is celebrated at the beginning of Matrinalis.

Satinalia: Once dedicated to the Old Goddess of Freedom, Zazikel—but now attributed more to the second moon, Satina—this holiday is accompanied by wild celebration, the wearing of masks, and naming the town fool as ruler for a day. In Antiva, Satinalia lasts for a week or more, while a week of fasting follows. In more pious areas, large feasts and the giving of gifts mark the holiday. Satinalia is celebrated at the beginning of Umbralis.

-981 ANCIENT: Tensions between Tevinter and the elves turn to open war. The Imperium besieges Arlathan.

-975 ANCIENT: The years-long siege of Arlathan ends when Tevinter is said to sink the city into the ground using blood magic. Surviving elves are enslaved.

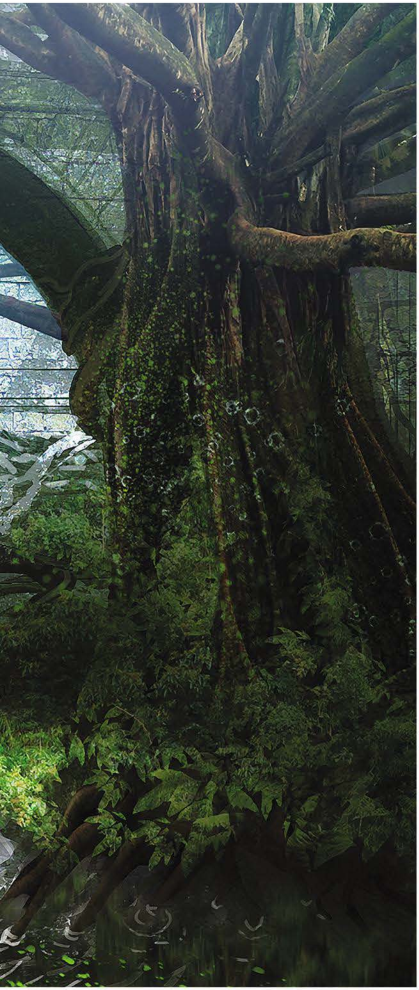
Over thousands of years of recorded history, much has been lost or forgotten.

The Tevinter Imperium expands rapidly, bolstered by its new elven slave class. The Imperium takes over nearly all of northern Thedas and begins pushing across the Waking Sea.

-895 ANCIENT

Tevinter settles the island of Estwatch, fortifying its bay and establishing a port for warship repair.

-880 ANCIENT



TEVINTER CALENDAR

The people of the Tevinter Imperium do not honor the authority of the Chantry or its calendar. Citizens of the Imperium follow their own calendar, which predates the Chantry's by well over a thousand years. The Tevinter calendar starts at the date the Imperium was founded and the first Archon was crowned, marked as 0 TE. Past history is counted back with negative numbers, much like the Chantry calendar.

Tevinter abandoned the use of its calendar briefly with the creation of the Chantry calendar, but returned to it after the Schism.

ELVEN CALENDAR

The elven calendar was established with the formation of the city of Arlathan. It was used for more than six thousand years, only to be banned when the Tevinter Imperium sacked Arlathan and enslaved the elven race. Modern scholars outside of Tevinter recognize the existence of the original elven calendar, although only a few key elven dates have survived the passage of time. These include the first contact with dwarves in 3000 FA (-4600 Ancient), the arrival of humans in 4500 FA (-3100 Ancient), and the founding of the Tevinter Imperium in 6405 FA (-1195 Ancient or 0 TE). The founding of Arlathan is marked as 1 FA, the earliest recorded date in the history of Thedas.

CALENDAR CONVERSION

Elven Calendar	Imperial Calendar	Chantry Calendar	Anchor Event
1 FA	-6405 TE*	-7600 Ancient*	Founding of Arlathan.
3000 FA	-3405 TE	-4600 Ancient	First elf-dwarf contact.
4500 FA	-1905 TE	-3100 Ancient	Humans explore Thedas.
6405 FA	**0 TE**	-1195 Ancient	Tevinter Imperium founded.
	800 TE	-395 Ancient	The First Blight begins.
	1025 TE	-170 Ancient	The death of Andraste.
	1195 TE	**1:1 Divine**	Chantry founded.
	1199 TE	1:5 Divine	The Second Blight begins.
	1481 TE	3:87 Towers	The Chantry Schism.
	1614 TE	5:20 Exalted	The Fourth Blight ends.
8429 FA	2024 TE	9:30 Dragon	Start of the Fifth Blight.
8436 FA	2131 TE	9:37 Dragon	Mage-templar war begins.
8439 FA	2034 TE	9:40 Dragon	Present day.

*Roughly estimated

-760 ANCIENT
Archon Almadrius takes the throne in Tevinter.

-715 ANCIENT
The Imperium stages several campaigns to subjugate the Alamarri in Ferelden. After many near misses, they succeed in holding the area for a time and construct the Imperial Highway across the mountains to Ostagar.

chapter two

RACES

Western Tevinter splits away, forming the Anderfels.

-695 ANCIENT

Almadrius is assassinated, and his apprentice Tidarion inherits the throne. Civil war breaks out in the Imperium.

-692 ANCIENT

THE HISTORY OF THEDAS IS RIFE WITH CONFLICT. Elves blame the humans for their mortality and lost empire. Humans fear the Qunari and their relentless march for conquest. Dwarves have too much trouble with the darkspawn to worry about drama on the surface, and limit contact by choice.

The differences between the races of Thedas go far deeper than the point of elven ears or the squat stature of the dwarves. What's more, distinct, sometimes opposing cultures thrive within each race's ranks, only adding to political and religious friction. The only thing all people in Thedas seem to have in common is the continent they call home.

HUMANS

Humans are the most powerful and common of all races in Thedas. But it wasn't always this way. While human history has a tendency to ignore or outright refute this, scholars believe there was a time when there wasn't a single human anywhere on the continent.

The humans are said to have first appeared from the north as a single tribe known as the Neromenians. It's not known where they came from or why they came. The first human settlers were met with hostility from the ruling elves. At the time, the elves were said to be immortal, and what little remains of elven history blames contact with humans for the loss of this immortality. The elves began to age and die as the humans did, a process the elves called "quickening." Fearing the effect, they distanced themselves from the humans, whom they called "quicklings." By retreating from their own lands, the elves allowed the humans to expand well into the continent.

Growing human tribes in the north united to form the Tevinter Imperium and became a significant power. The magic users of the Imperium made peace with the dwarves, but the elves remained their enemies. Eventually, the conflict between humans and elves came to a head. Tevinter laid waste to the elven empire, marching all the way to the capital, Arlathan.

Arlathan's destruction elevated humans to a place of power in Thedas, one they have yet to relinquish. Human influence continued to spread through Thedas with the rise of the Imperium, and then, with the rise of Andraste and her Cult of the Maker.

Fereldan humans dress for the elements.

A Fractured People

While humans are the dominant race in Thedas, they are also the most fractured. The race's tribal roots led to the evolution of distinct groups with their own languages, customs, and beliefs.

Tidarion dies without an heir. As the war continues, magisters vie for power.

-640 ANCIENT

The Imperium establishes Emerius—later renamed Kirkwall—as a settlement for slaves, largely to mine the jet stone used for construction of the great temples of Minrathous.

-620 ANCIENT

The civil war in Tevinter ends with Archon Parthenius claiming the throne.

-620 ANCIENT

These distinctions have been at the heart of numerous conflicts between human nations and religious movements.

The ancient Tevinter religion, which revered a pantheon of dragons known as the Old Gods, clashed with the fledgling Cult of the Maker. When belief in the Maker became the single largest religion in Thedas, conflicts then arose over interpretations of the Maker's teachings. The Chantry, based in Orlais, severed ties with the Imperial Chantry in Tevinter over differing beliefs regarding magic and its place in the world.

The ambitions of human nations have also made for unstable borders. Both Tevinter and Orlais were at one time vast empires that threatened or outright conquered other human nations like Ferelden and the Free Marches.

Scholars wrestle to explain humanity's ability to maintain power over most of Thedas, given all the infighting.

Ferelden was first settled by Alamarri barbarians. Tribes persist to this day on the nation's fringes.

EARLY HUMAN TRIBES

TEVINTER IMPERIUM

Neromenian: Believed to be the first humans in Thedas, the Neromenians fought early battles with the elves and were also the first humans to practice magic. They settled the entire coastline along the Nocen Sea. Eventually, three distinct tribes broke off to form separate kingdoms: Qarinus, Tevinter, and Barindur. The remaining Neromenians persisted under their own king until the formation of the Imperium, the first major human nation in Thedas.

Qarinus: This eastern pre-Imperium kingdom, an offshoot of the Neromenians, was centered in the city now known as Qarinus. It was eventually united under the Tevinter Imperium.

Tevinter: Another offshoot of the Neromenians, this early human tribe aligned itself with the dwarves and eventually absorbed the Neromenian and Qarinus tribes to form the Imperium.

Barindur: Not much is known about this kingdom, which is said to have completely disappeared after losing favor with the Old God Dumat. All that remains is a path and bare rock.

FERELDEN

Alamarri: This ancient people occupied the land now known as Ferelden as members of various tribes, primarily the Clayne, Chasind, and Avvar. The legendary Calenhad, backed by the Clayne and some Avvars and Chasind, united Ferelden and forced opposing tribe members into the new nation's fringes.

Clayne: A historically powerful Alamarri tribe, the Clayne joined Calenhad to help form the nation of Ferelden.

Chasind: Some members of the Alamarri tribe, called Chasind, resisted the unification of Ferelden, retreating to the Korcari Wilds in the south. There they continue to live a peaceful if misunderstood life in small communities. Their leaders are shamans, respected in Chasind culture for their magical abilities.

Avvar: Like the Chasind, some Avvars resisted the unification of tribes under Calenhad. They were pushed into the Frostback Mountains, where they remain a stubbornly independent people with their own customs and religion. They are frequently referred to as "hillsmen" or the "Sky Cult."

ORLAIS & NEVARRA

Ciriane: Loosely defined and culturally rich, the Ciriane people prospered in the fertile crescent of what is now central Orlais. While other tribes faced pressure from Neromenians in the north, the Ciriane were largely isolated, and remained a strong, distinct people until the founding of Orlais after the First Blight. Ciriane culture has all but disappeared.

Inghirsh: Originally the largest cohesive culture in the north of what is now Orlais, the Inghirsh would become decentralized to the point of wandering family tribes of no more than ten members. Nomadic and isolationist, the Inghirsh were on the losing end of a conflict with the Neromenians. The survivors were largely absorbed into the Ciriane and Planasene.

Planasene: The Planasene were a farming people with a surprisingly long written history and a strong culture of animist worship. Many Nevarrans trace their roots back to this tribe.

After generations of independence, the Anderfels are retaken by the thriving Imperium.

-535 ANCIENT

A group of kossith is believed to land in the south Korcari Wilds, establishing a colony. They are likely killed off in the First Blight, giving rise to the first appearance of ogres on the continent.

-410 ANCIENT

COMMON CURSES

So, lad—you're getting your sight straight in your first days topside, so here's some advice: you're not just trading with kin. You're selling to all kinds of folk now, with different customs and tongues. As I've learned here, the most important part of any language is the cussing. It gets you trust. It gets you coin.

Most elves you see in the city are servants, and a human looking for a fight might call one "knife-ear." If the elf returns with "shem" or "quick," blood's about to spill. Those Dalish elves use "flat-ear" to insult the ones who live with humans—like our unenlightened kin below calling us Stone-blind up here.

Even the humans who pray to some woman they burned alive—and her god they call "the Maker"—say something when they knock their shins. It's a curse to say "Andraste's . . ."—well, any body part, really. "Maker's breath!" might get you in with a swaggering fool, but the lady priests won't be pleased. Chantry folk also don't like mages. If you hear a mage called a "spellbind," hide anything flammable.

Then there are all those beautiful words that just mean "Sod it!" When that loose cobblestone flips and the ankle cracks, an elf will cry, "Fenedhis!" while a human might, "Damn it!" A Qunari will mumble, "Vashedan!" I've even heard a couple Tevinters yell, "Kaffar!"

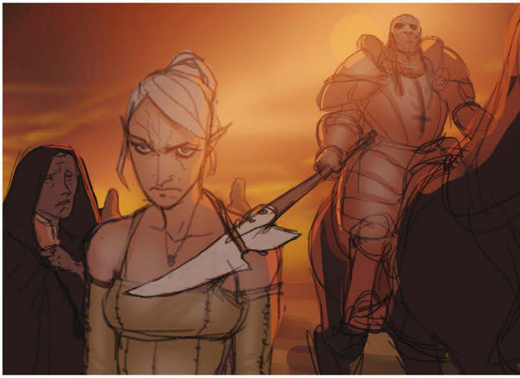
If any of these get aimed at you, hopefully all that gets killed is a sale.

—Note from Hardal, a surface merchant dwarf, to an apprentice adjusting to life outside Orzammar

Duke Prosper de Monfort, Orlesian nobleman.

ELVES

The elves are a common race in Thedas, distinguished physically by their large eyes, willowy frames, and pointy ears. Their long history is colored by ages of human oppression.



HISTORY

The once-powerful elves are now second-class citizens in most of Thedas.

Today's elves are mere shadows of their ancestors. The proper name for elves is elvhen, meaning "the people." They once ruled a vast kingdom called Elvhenan, translated as "the place of the people." The lost city of Arlathan was its capital.

It is said that the elves were once immortal beings who lived by their own rules and beliefs. When humans arrived, the elves lost their immortality and blamed the humans for this "quickening." The elves were eventually conquered by the Tevinter Imperium. Most were enslaved, and generations under the Imperium thumb all but killed elven culture, language, and history.

When Andraste and her Cult of the Maker rose to prominence, they brought a successful war against the Imperium, forcing the empire to pull back its borders. Led by the controversial elven disciple Shartan, enslaved elves of Tevinter rose up to aid Andraste's cause. For their service, the elves were freed and given the Dales, a land in southern Orlais, and a new capital called Halamshiral. The exodus to their new homeland was called the Long Walk.

In secret, a group of the most powerful Tevinter magisters open a gate into the Golden City, entering it physically. They are cast violently back into the physical world twisted and corrupted—the first darkspawn.

-395 ANCIENT

In the Dales, the elves attempted to rebuild their culture and once again worship their pantheon of lost gods. After generations under Tevinter, much of the the old ways were gone, even some of their gods' names. The elves practiced what they could remember and adopted new beliefs to fill in the gaps.

Relations with humans remained hostile, and the elven rejection of the Maker became cause for Chantry ire. The elves founded a legion, known as the Emerald Knights, to protect their land from human intrusion. Tensions mounted, and when a small elven raiding party attacked the human village of Red Crossing, the Chantry called an Exalted March to crush the elven people and conquer the Dales in a series of brutal battles.

The surviving elves, kicked from the Dales, split apart. Some became the wanderers known as the Dalish, traveling in groups and stubbornly clinging to barely remembered traditions. Other elves, bitterly resigned to their fate, now live among humankind as "city elves," second-class citizens, servants, and laborers segregated to ghettos known as alienages.

LONG WALK TO HALAMSHIRAL

Only sixty-five of our group made it to Halamshiral. Some gave up. Some sickened, especially the little ones. Bandits stalked us. My mother forgive me, I had to steal food. A child fought me for extra scraps of bread. A few days later, I carried her for miles after her legs gave out. She died shivering in my arms.

I used to have a master, a mage. He fed me well, never beat me, even taught me how to read so I could do his accounts. But if he had a theory or a spell he wanted to test out, he'd get out his daggers, have the other servants tie me to a post, and carve furrows into my skin. I was so afraid. Every time, I was sure I would die. But at worst I'd collapse, get bandaged up, and lie in bed too weak to move for days. The other slaves visited me in secret to survey the damage. I'd heal just enough before he needed blood again.

That is why I traveled from Vol Dorma to the Dales with nothing but rags on my back. That is why there were one hundred and five of us when we set out, all elven. That is why I fell to my knees and wept when we crossed through the gates of my new home, a village for my people.

—Anonymous account of the Long Walk, as told to Brother Pekor of Ferelden, circa -140 Ancient

ALIENAGES

An alienage is a section of a predominantly human community reserved for the elven population. In many cities, the alienage is walled off from the other quarters. This is to allow the city authorities to lock down the alienage, should a reason arise.

Many alienages are plagued by poverty and crime. It is also common for infrastructure to fall into disrepair, as humans tend to let alienage residents fend for themselves, often without access to city services. While this segregation has allowed the elves a fair bit of social autonomy among their own people, it has also encouraged their isolation and substandard status.

The First Blight begins.

-395 ANCIENT

The darkspawn multiply and attack en masse, concentrating at first on the underground Deep Roads used by the dwarves. As the dwarven thaigs fall, the darkspawn use the Deep Roads to reach the edges of the Imperium. They surface and chaos ensues.

-380 ANCIENT

The Dalish wander the land in aravel caravans.

SULEDIN (ENDURE)

"Suledin" is an elven song about enduring and emerging from sorrow, tied to the loss of their ancient lands, but commonly adapted to express personal struggles as well.

Original Text	Phonetic	Translation (rough)
Melava inan enasal	*mee-LAH-vah ih-nawn ehn-AH-sahl*	Time was once a blessing
ir su aravel tu elvaral	*eer soo ahr-AH-vel too ehl-vah-rehl*	but long journeys are made longer
u na emma abelas	*oo na EMM-ah ah-BELL-aws*	when alone within.
in elgar sa vir mana	*in ELL-gahr sah veer MAH-nah*	Take spirit from the long ago
in tu setheneran din emma na	*in too SETH-in-AIR-awn din EMM-ah nah*	but do not dwell in lands no longer yours.
lath sulevin	*lawth soo-lah-VEEN*	Be certain in need,
lath aravel ena	*lawth ar-RAH-vel eh-NAH*	and the path will emerge
arla ven tu vir mahvir	*ahr-lah VEHN too veer mah-VEER*	to a home tomorrow
melana 'nehn	*mee-LAH-nah nay-in*	and time will again
enasal ir sa lethalin	*ehn-ah-sal eer sah leth-ah-LEEN*	be the joy it once was.

The Blight has yet to reach the Alamarri. They are instead caught up in a war with the Avvar. In the Battle of Red Falls, Alamarri warrior Luthias Dwarfson fights Morrighan'nan, Avvar warrior queen. Both die in the battle. The Order of Ash Warriors is founded in Dwarfson's honor.

-355 ANCIENT

Amid the poverty of an alienage, a decorated vhenadahl, or "tree of the people," grows in tribute to the elves' ancient homeland Arlathan.

THE DALISH

The Dalish are a nomadic breed of elves who openly refuse to live under human rule. They see themselves as the keepers of ancient elven lore and dedicate themselves to gathering and preserving the remnants of their lost culture.

Before the Exalted March of the Dales, many Dalish were elven nobility. Though their status has long been stripped away, they maintain the same pride and sense of duty held by their ancestors.

The Dalish live and travel in clans. Often unwelcome in human cities, they tend to stick to forests and other wilder places, never staying anywhere for too long. Their small bands, often made up of only blood relatives, are each led by a wise, senior member known as a keeper.

"The Dalish travel in ornately carved wagons known as aravel," Brother Genitivi wrote, "drawn by large white stags called halla." The "landships," he observed, are "adorned with broad hoods and bright silken cloths that flap in the wind, often displaying the noble banners that once flew over that family's house."

Many elven aravel display banners that once flew over noble family homes.

The halla are a domesticated animal unique to the Dalish, originating in Arlathan and bred to large numbers once more in the Dales. The stags served as mounts for the Emerald Knights when the Dales were still home to the elves.

All adult Dalish have tattoos on their faces. The intricate ink work is called vallaslin, or "blood writing." The tradition serves not only to identify the Dalish, but to illustrate, in a permanent fashion, their commitment to the old ways.

Most Dalish groups tend to keep to themselves. However, once every ten years, clans will congregate in a single, remote location to take part in Arlathvhen, an event meaning "for love of the people." Lore keepers exchange stories and knowledge at this massive gathering. While the old ways of the elves are celebrated,

ELVEN PHRASES

What survives of the elven language is largely kept alive by the Dalish. City elves may live and die speaking only the common tongue.

Elven	Translation
abelas	Sorrow; to be sorry.
aravel	An ornate, sailed wagon used by the Dalish, called a "landship" by humans; also, a physical and spiritual path, a journey with purpose.
banalhan	"The place of nothing," the elven name for the Blight, or, rather, where the Blight comes from.
bellanaris	Eternity.
din	The dead.
durgen'len	"Children of the Stone," the elven name for the dwarves.
enasal	Joy in triumph over loss; a variation of joyful relief.
harel	To trick or deceive. *Harellan* means "trickster."
lath	Love of being; also, to be in love.
nadas	Inevitability; something that must be.
revas	Freedom.
solas	Pride; to stand tall.
sulahn'nehn	Rejoice; joy.
suledin	The concept of finding strength in enduring loss or pain.
uthenera	Immortal.

The Grey Wardens are founded at Weisshaupt.

-305 ANCIENT

Paragon Caridin creates the first golem in an effort to better fight the darkspawn scourge.

-255 ANCIENT

sad lessons of the destruction of both Arlathan and the Dales are also recounted and discussed. It is an important time for the clans, a show of unity for an otherwise isolated people.

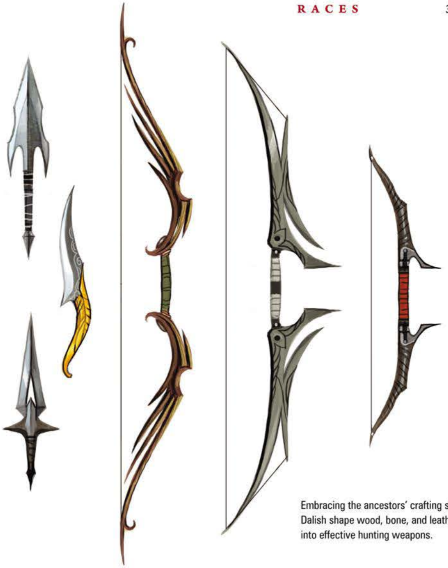
Ways of the Hunter

Though much of the teachings of elven religion were lost to generations of oppression and slavery, traditions do persist. The Ways of the Hunter, said to be passed down by Andruil, goddess of the hunt, instruct the elves on the proper means to respect and use nature's gifts.

Vir Assan, the Way of the Arrow: "Be swift and silent," Andruil taught. "Strike true; do not waver. And let not your prey suffer."

Vir Bor'assan, the Way of the Bow: "As the sapling bends, so must you. In yielding, find resilience; in pliancy, find strength."

Vir Adahlen, the Way of the Wood: "Receive the gifts of the hunt with mindfulness. Respect the sacrifice of my children. Know that your passing shall nourish them in turn."



Embracing the ancestors' crafting skills, Dalish shape wood, bone, and leather into effective hunting weapons.

The dwarves are a hardy people. Males commonly wear beards.

DWARVES

Dwarves are a race of stocky, robust builders who live in underground communities called thaigs. Their once strong numbers have been diminished by ages of war with the darkspawn. Most thaigs are now empty, and the vast network of tunnels known as the Deep Roads that connected the thaigs are mostly sealed and overrun with the darkspawn, even in the absence of a Blight.

The dwarves now primarily inhabit two thaigs: Orzammar and Kal-Sharok. Others live in exile on the surface.

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

The Children of the Stone are a stout race both shorter and broader than most humans. They also tend to have a stronger constitution;

Caridin vanishes, taking the secret of the golems' construction with him. The secret stays buried for ages.

-248 ANCIENT

Coordinating a massive army from across Thedas, the Grey Wardens defeat the Archdemon Dumat at the Battle of the Silent Plains, ending the First Blight.

-203 ANCIENT

Endrin Stonehammer, the most well-known and revered Paragon, famously moved the dwarven capital from Kal-Sharok to Orzammar.

sickness is almost unknown among dwarves. However, their proximity to the darkspawn takes its toll on the population. Those who survive encounters on the Deep Roads often suffer from corruption-caused infertility. The result is an ever-dwindling dwarven population that is small by surface standards.

Living underground, the dwarves have superior vision in the dark. Their rocky surroundings also give the dwarves another unique quality: the walls of many caves are laced with lyrium, a mineral source of magic in Thedas. Living in close proximity to lyrium for so long, the dwarves have developed a natural immunity to magic. The downside is that this exposure also makes it impossible for dwarves to wield magic. Dwarves who live on the surface will lose their protective immunity over time. Despite this, no known dwarf, surface or otherwise, has managed to wield magic.

HISTORY

Before the Blights, there were dozens of thaigs, each with a healthy number of inhabitants. Though each thaig enjoyed autonomy, the race was largely united and kept a proper capital, first in Kal-Sharok, and later in Orzammar.

Their world beneath the world was all but destroyed by the First Blight. The darkspawn attacked the dwarves first, using the Deep Roads to systematically sack dozens of thaigs. As the thaigs fell, the darkspawn spread underneath Thedas and eventually reached all ends of the continent. Several dwarven kingdoms were destroyed completely. However, the four largest—Orzammar,

The hulking brontos are bred by the dwarves as beasts of burden and sources of food.

The prophet Andraste is born in Ferelden. The exact year of her birth is hotly contested by scholars.

Slowly, the last of the darkspawn are cut down and forced underground. For the dwarves, the Blight continues; for the surface world, the battle is over.

-203 ANCIENT

-195 ANCIENT

Kal-Sharok, Hormak, and Gundaar—survived by working together and sealing off key roads.

After more than a hundred years, the Grey Wardens slayed the Archdemon that spurred the Blight and drove the remaining darkspawn back underground. For surfacers, the generations-long battle was over, but the Blight continued for the dwarves.

In -15 Ancient, the dwarves of Orzammar sealed the last of the Deep Roads leading into their kingdom. The old capital of Kal-Sharok was assumed lost, along with Hormak and Gundaar.

CULTURE

To discuss the culture of today's dwarf is to look at the dwarves of Orzammar, as there is no other place where dwarves exist in such significant numbers. The other major center, the recently rediscovered Kal-Sharok, evolved in isolation, and the cultural effect of so many ages apart from their brethren is still largely unknown.

Among Orzammar dwarves, single-mindedness is both a signature strength and weakness. Their ability to dedicate themselves to a cause has allowed them to survive in conditions that would kill any other race and has given rise to a level of technology that far surpasses anything else in Thedas. Examples of this ingenuity include dwarven clockwork, mechanical weaponry, and steam power.

Orzammar society is divided into rigid castes of nobles, warriors, smiths, artisans, miners, merchants, servants, and surfacers.

SHAPERATE

The order of the Shapers is dedicated to preserving the history and knowledge of the dwarves. There are three kinds of Shapers. The most prominent is the Shaperate of Memory. Based in the noble quarter of Orzammar, its main purpose is to record and keep the essential records known as Memories.

There is also the Shaperate of Stone, which keeps mundane records of work and marriage, and the Shaperate of Golems, which is largely defunct.

Shapers are encouraged to travel the Deep Roads and seek out long-buried historical truths, making the job far more dangerous than that of the average librarian or bookkeeper.

"The Shaper must step away from the familiar to seek out revelations from the frontier or from buried secrets of paths abandoned," states *The Shaper's Life*, a widely read authority on the order. "The Shaper must first walk away if he is to return."

DARKTOWN'S DEAL

Ask the nobles of Orzammar how their kingdom gets silks and grain and wine from the surface, and they'll tell you "trade with the surface occurs." It occurs. As if on its own. With no traders or merchants or human farmers involved. A little miracle of dwarven ingenuity.

The reality is a lot messier than their fantasy.

Orzammar relies upon the surface not just for its prosperity, but for its survival. Ages of Blights have taken thousands of thaigs away from the dwarves. These were the places where most of the food was raised. The dwarven kingdom that endured alone, independent beneath the Stone from time immemorial, perished in the First Blight, faded into myth. Now, the remaining dwarves underground cling to existence through a lifeline to the surface, a chain forged from the casteless.

Every dwarf who goes to the surface is stripped of caste, effectively exiled and removed from dwarven society forever. But Orzammar relies on continued relations with these exiles to live. This has created a shadowy area of dwarven trade and politics where the rich, powerful, and elite maintain secret ties to people who, by official decree, no longer exist. And everyone knows what kinds of things lurk in the shadows.

The Carta lives in the underbelly of the surface trade like a tapeworm. Many surface dwarves maintain ties—not officially recognized, of course, but respectable—to their former houses in the Noble or Merchant castes, and those contacts are their means of trading with Orzammar. Those who have no ties, because they were cast off by their families or never had good connections, make the trip back underground to trade with Orzammar personally, where they find themselves treated like criminals. A casteless in Orzammar, even a wealthy one from the surface, will be driven away from most merchants, treated like he's carrying a plague at best. So these surface merchants turn to the Carta for help. The Carta acts as a contact in Orzammar for surface businesses and sells their goods on the black market. For a cut, of course. The Carta always gets its cut.

The outraged citizens of Orzammar sometimes petition the Assembly to deal with the rampant crime surrounding the black market, and showy displays are made of kicking in the doors to Carta hideouts and razing Dust Town. But the Carta always comes back, because the Assembly always allows it. Too much of Orzammar is dependent on the black market trade, and the nobles know it. They all do business with the Carta. Everyone has a stake in its success. The Carta has a thousand faces above and below the surface—honest merchants and Noble Caste lords and upstanding members of the Merchants Guild—all a cover for the thousands more smugglers, thieves, and murderers in the shadows. The lifeline of Orzammar. Praise the Ancestors.

—Excerpted from Darktown's Deal, *by Varric Tethras*

As the Deep Roads close, communication lines falter between the surviving dwarven kingdoms. Each thaig elects its own king while maintaining allegiance to a high king in Orzammar.

-195 ANCIENT

Intelligent darkspawn capable of advanced thought and speech are discovered. The Warden Sashamiri captures Corypheus, who is said to be the greatest of these darkspawn.

-191 ANCIENT

LEGION OF THE DEAD

The Legion of the Dead is a famous dwarven military unit that is both celebrated and shunned. Many convicted criminals join the Legion rather than face exile or the loss of their caste. Dwarves who are already casteless also join, hoping that it will impart some respectability to their family names.

Once in the Legion, all records of a dwarf's past crimes are erased. The members descend into the Deep Roads to battle darkspawn together until death. When they join, Legion dwarves are given a ritual akin to a funeral. Indeed, members are treated by dwarven society as if they are dead. They are assumed to spend their remaining days living up to their promise. There is no retirement from the Legion, only an honorable death in the Deep Roads.

It isn't unheard of for a noble to willingly join the Legion, but it is exceptionally rare.

A dwarf is born into a societal role. Only those born to Smith Caste parents may become blacksmiths, and a servant who marries a noblewoman will never be a noble himself. His daughters will be nobles, and his sons servants, for daughters inherit the caste of their mother, while sons inherit the caste of their father.

"The caste system in Orzammar includes many groups of privilege," Genitivi once wrote. "Nobility and warriors are above all others."

Merchants, smiths, artisans, and miners are of slightly less nobility, but are still considered upper class. The Servant Caste is lower, and there is also an underclass of casteless. These descendants of criminals and other undesirables have their faces branded to mark their rock bottom status in dwarven society. Casteless dwarves are denied the right to work any honest job. Instead, they are forced to eke out meager livings as beggars or worse, simply to survive.

"The dwarves we know on the surface are also considered casteless once they leave Orzammar," Genitivi observed, "although this is only relevant to those who return—if they are allowed to return at all."

Many surface dwarves become members of the Merchants Guild, a powerful union that trades dwarven goods with surfacers.

THAIGS

Numerous thaigs once existed, built under every major mountain range and connected by the Deep Roads. Only Orzammar and Kal-Sharok survived ages of Blights.

Dwarven-crafted armor and weapons are considered the finest in Thedas.

Andraste marries Maferath, an Alamarri chieftain.

-187 ANCIENT

Orzammar

Orzammar rests in the Frostback Mountains, which create a natural border between Orlais and the western outreaches of Ferelden. It is a huge, underground metropolis of more than one hundred thousand dwarves.

The thaig's layout is determined by its strict caste system. The king's palace and Assembly halls sit highest, in a tier known as the Diamond Quarter, which is also home to the Shaperate. A complicated system of stairs and passages cut down from the Diamond Quarter, through the noble areas, to the Commons, and finally to the casteless slums of Dust Town.

The dwarven Merchant Caste has the most influence in the Commons, where the many works of Orzammar's craftsmen are bought and sold. Connected are the Proving Grounds, an ancient venue for the public settling of dwarven disputes. The Commons is also where visitors to Orzammar spend most of their time, it being the thaig's center for trade.

Below the Proving Grounds is the broken down Dust Town. "It is a haven for crime, organized and otherwise," Genitivi wrote of this dwarven slum. "Orzammar's guards cannot be bothered to patrol its streets." Many in Dust Town turn to drink, specifically the toxic lichen ale so common in the quarter.

TRADING WITH KAL-SHAROK

My approach was carefully observed. This was not a thaig unused to watching its boundaries. I got the impression that if I'd been one of his Orzammar cousins, our meeting would've been swift and bloody. That is, if I'd been allowed to find the passage at all. As it was, he was polite and efficient, and he knew well the current market for everything he offered. Clearly their isolation is not because of fear, and certainly not disinterest. Among his wares, I saw the latest fabrics of Val Royeaux and volumes by a Free Marcher poet three centuries dead. This only added to my doubt of the official year of Kal-Sharok's "rediscovery" as declared by the Assembly of Orzammar. I didn't mention this to my host. As curious as I was, there was an undercurrent I found unsettling. I must stress that he and his helpers were professional and honest throughout. But there was something I can't describe. While he remained hooded the entire time, he looked me square in the eye when our deal was struck, unashamed.

I lived through a time of Blight. I've felt the gaze of a Grey Warden and seen the corruption of his prey. Why I remembered both in that moment, I still can't explain.

—On meeting Novas Sturhald in Kal-Sharok, excerpted from the journals of Ser Evrain Abernache, noble merchant-scholar

Kal-Sharok

Nestled beneath the Hunterhorn Mountains, the kingdom of Kal-Sharok was once the capital of the dwarven empire. Its close proximity to the Tevinter capital of Minrathous led to a strong bond with the Imperium, contributing to the military and infrastructure of the burgeoning human nation.

As humanity's influence spread and the Imperium weakened, the dwarven capital was moved to the southern thaig of Orzammar. This was the first of many blows to the dwarves of Kal-Sharok. When the Blight struck, they were among the hardest hit. A robust people, they survived only to be eventually abandoned by Orzammar, whose leaders saw it in their best interest to abandon Kal-Sharok in the interest of self-preservation.

Early in the Dragon Age, Kal-Sharok was rediscovered. Residents of the former capital had subsisted for ages in complete isolation. King Endrin Aeducan, then the respected king of Orzammar, was the one credited with restoring contact. Relations between the two thaigs have since been tense at best, with Kal-Sharok's leadership yet to publicly forgive Orzammar for its actions.

Andraste preaches of a new creator, whom she calls the Maker. The more she says, the more her following grows. Maferath uses her teachings to unite the Alamarri clans under his authority.

The Imperium's influence recedes in southern Thedas as Minrathous rebuilds.

-186 ANCIENT

-184 ANCIENT

"The Memories tell us that our kingdom once reached far beneath the mountains, and that the thaigs were almost beyond counting." —Shaper Czibor

Generations of isolation mean that dwarves from Kal-Sharok don't share the relatively recent cultural influences of Orzammar's extended interactions with the surface. The two thaigs share the same base language, but Kal-Sharok has a regional dialect that draws more on an older manner of speech, less influenced by the surface. Kal-Sharok does not place the same emphasis on castes, and members of its Assembly can come from any family. It also doesn't recognize the king of Orzammar in any official capacity.

Kal-Sharok dwarves still honor ancestors called Paragons, but they do not recognize the Paragons of Orzammar, just as Orzammar does not recognize theirs.

The dwarves of Kal-Sharok have been slow to let outsiders in. Scholars are only now beginning to understand what they had to do to survive so many ages in isolation.

Forgotten Thaigs

Dozens of thaigs were destroyed during the Blights. In the ages since, much of the history that survived in other thaigs has been lost. Some thaigs, like Kal'Barosh and Varen, are barely remembered—even their locations are unknown. Others, like Ortan and Cadash, have been uncovered and explored.

The roots of many dwarves in Orzammar can be traced back to houses in lost thaigs. For these houses, and the Shaperate that struggles to keep their records, it is considered a great discovery to learn the names and fate of a lost thaig's people.

DWARVEN CONCEPTS

While it is exceptionally rare for dwarves not to be fluent in the common tongue, they use many words and phrases unique to their people. Some of these words have roots in the language spoken before the dwarves made contact with humans or elves.

Dwarven	Translation
amgarrak	Victory.
amgeforn	Sacrifice.
amgetoll	Duty.
cloudgazer	Surface dwarves who have lost their Stone sense.
duster	A derogatory term for a casteless dwarf.
isana	Lyrium, also called "singing stone."
kallak	War.
salroka	A friend; literally, "one at my side."
topside	The surface.
wim and wam	Whine and plead.

QUNARI

There is another race, relatively new to Thedas, that most people call Qunari. This race is large and powerful; on average, they tower over humans by a foot or more. Most have horns growing from their heads.

However, the label "Qunari" more accurately refers to a follower of the religious text known as the Qun, regardless of his or her race—hence the capitalization of the name in many texts.

The horned race's ancient name is "kossith." This term is not widely used or even widely known outside scholarly circles.

An Arishok is one-third of the Qunari leadership triumvirate; the others are the Arigena and the Ariqun.

The Chasind claim the fortress of Ostagar.

Years spent studying Corypheus in captivity teach the Wardens little, as his influence penetrates the minds of even the most powerful mages. The Wardens seal him away deep in the Vimmark Mountains, concealing his existence.

-184 ANCIENT

-181 ANCIENT

Qunari leadership do not recognize even the concept of kossith and few if any rank and file Qunari are aware of the word.

The Qun's teachings are so pervasive that, under its law, a person's race does not really matter. A person is either Qunari or not Qunari, and because the Qunari have practiced selective breeding for thousands of years, no one can be certain what the original kossith looked like.

HISTORY

The Qunari arrived on the shores of Thedas several ages ago from an uncharted territory. They came by way of incredible warships called dreadnoughts and immediately began a war to dominate all peoples in their path. Humans in particular are a lesser people to the Qunari, in large part because of the looser restrictions they place on the practice of magic when compared to the Qun.

Even among the Qunari, not much is known about where they came from or why they landed in Thedas. Conquest seems like the obvious answer. The Qunari see conversion to the Qun as a benefit to all.

To many humans, the Qunari are an evil and tyrannical people who do not believe in individual rights. In the lands occupied by Qunari, all other belief systems are expelled, families are split apart, marriages are forbidden, and any dissenter is sent for "reeducation" by a secret police that watches for any violation of the strict Qunari ethos.

Though a delicate peace exists currently between the Qunari and the rest of Thedas, with the magic-celebrating Imperium as the exception, future conflict is almost assured. The Qun is an implacable force that will not be denied.

For more about the Qunari, including the Qun's history and how it dictates gender roles, child rearing, and politics, see the Religion chapter of this book.

WHAT DISCIPLINE ACHIEVES

We came first from the sea. The dreadnoughts took Par Vollen at a stroke. We marched on the land called Seheron, then Rivain and the Tevinter Imperium. Our viddathari told us the Tevinter capital of Minrathous was unassailable; though it did not fall, its walls were cracked with steel and baqoun fire. Tevinter saw what discipline achieves.

The bas called us conquerors when we brought them purpose. When we Tamassrans teach a child to read or a wilderness is made fruitful, is that conquest?

Without the certainty of the Qun, there can be no reason. The bas raised three retaliations against our forces, pushing back in Antiva and Rivain. The kabethari, still adapting to the Qun's rule, suffered worst—the very people the bas sought to "liberate." The land burned, while the bas called us savages.

Such madness and hypocrisy needed another answer. We signed the treaties of the bas to silence them, and left.

We will return. Patience is the manifestation of self-control. While the bas bicker amongst themselves, we prepare. What is time compared to the demands of the Qun?

—Tamassran teaching notes, recovered and translated

Qunari generally refer to each other by their roles in society rather than birth names.

LANGUAGE

Qunari speak a harsh language called Qunlat. As a rule, Qunari have little use for communication beyond its necessities. When speaking to those who do not follow the Qun, their statements are often laconic, with a kind of underlying condescension.

Few among the Qun's people speak the common tongue, and fewer speak it well. In a culture that strives for mastery, to have only a passable degree of skill is perhaps embarrassing, and so Qunari often keep quiet among foreigners.

QUNARI CONCEPTS

Qunlat	Translation
anaan	Victory.
aqun	Balance.
asala	Soul.
ataash	Glory.
bas	A foreigner; also, a thing or object. A *basalit-an* is a respected foreigner.
gaatlok	A black explosive powder unique to the Qunari. Only they have non-magical cannons and explosives. Gaatlok is perhaps not as powerful as magic, but it is usable by anyone. There is no literal translation, but it derives from death, the earth, and glory.
imekari	Children.
issqun	Mastery.
kabethari	The term used by Qunari for recently conquered peoples who have not yet been indoctrinated into the ways of the Qun. It means "simple people."
qalaba	A Qunari animal known for its stupidity.
qamek	A poison used on the hopeless who refuse to be reeducated, as well as on captured magic users (who are considered already hopeless). It effectively lobotomizes victims and turns them into mindless laborers.
qunoran vehl	A mentor, one who serves as an example to others.
ralshokra	An military challenge where the higher ranks are fought for and defended to the death.
viddathari	Those who have been newly converted to the Qun.

Maferath's barbarian horde pushes north and begins an outright assault on the Imperium. Andraste's word spreads among oppressed Tevinter subjects and incites slave uprisings. Southern Tevinter begins to properly collapse.

-180 ANCIENT

Tevinter abandons the island of Estwatch to focus on mainland troubles. The island remains largely uninhabited for ages.

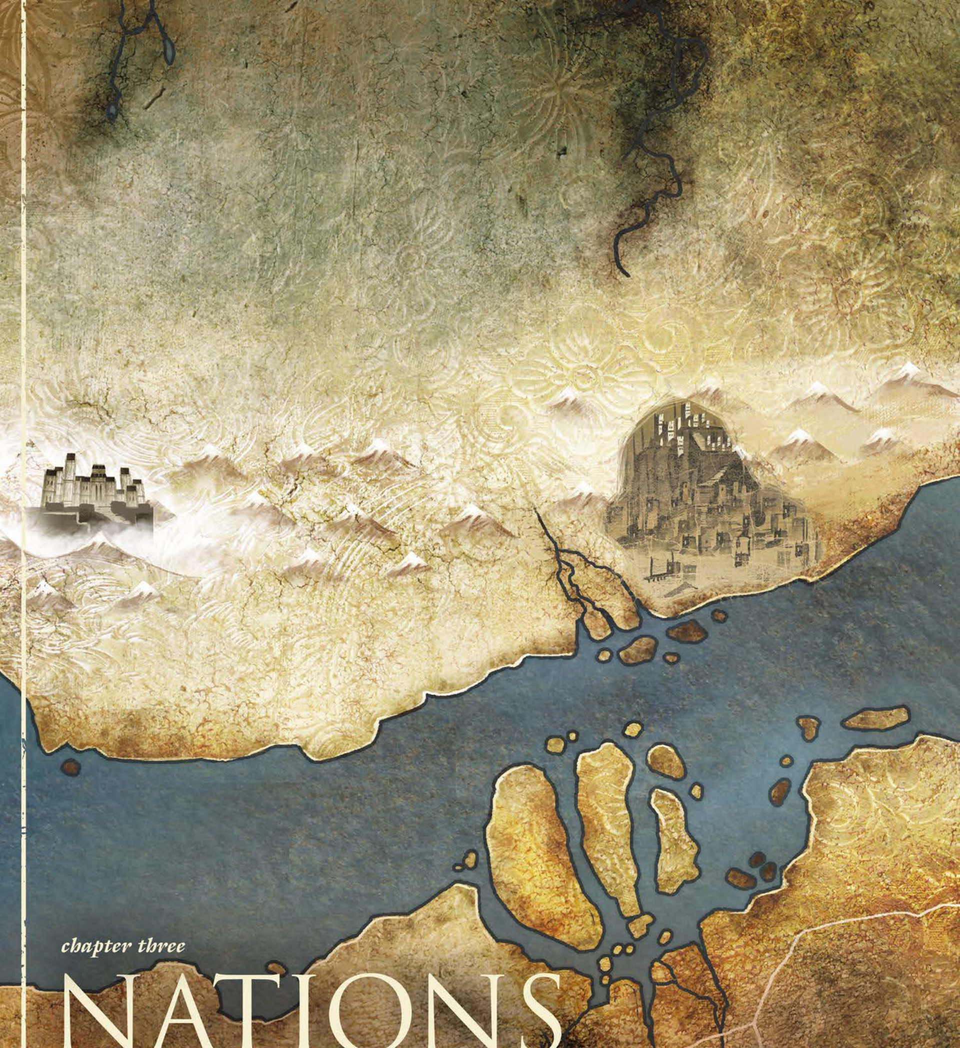
-180 ANCIENT

The Battle of Valarian Fields is fought between the Alamarri and the Tevinter Imperium. Maferath is victorious.

-171 ANCIENT

At the Battle of Valarian Fields, the elven slave Shartan takes Maferath's side and leads other elves in the fight against their Tevinter oppressors. He later converts and is made a disciple, only to have his writings suppressed following the Exalted March of the Dales.

-171 ANCIENT



chapter three

NATIONS

Andraste and the Maker are given credit for Maferath's military victories. Maferath's jealousy overwhelms him. Wanting to bring an end to hostilities and tighten his grip on conquered territories, he makes a pact with the Archon Hessarian of Tevinter.

-171 ANCIENT

Andraste is betrayed by her husband at the city-state of Nevarra, one of their strongholds. She is brought to Minrathous and executed by the Imperium.

-170 ANCIENT

THERE ARE NO FIRM BORDERS IN THEDAS. But wander into the next kingdom over and the change is obvious. Attitudes start to shift. People pay different taxes, pledge allegiance to different thrones, worship different gods. A nation's influence may strengthen as you move closer to the capital. And on the farthest edges of some countries, locals may claim no king at all.

While the dwarves, Qunari, and Dalish are distinct peoples with their own cultures and customs, by far the most powerful nations of Thedas are the many human kingdoms that carve up the continent. From the blighted Anderfels to opulent Orlais, each nation has its own charms and challenges. For some, a little more land is always within reach. For others, it's enough just to survive.

FERELDEN

Ferelden is a nation in southeast Thedas best known as the likely birthplace of Andraste and the battleground of the Fifth Blight. It is home to significant communities of dwarves in Orzammar and Dalish elves in the Brecilian Forest. Life and politics in Ferelden have been historically turbulent, defined by ages of tribal rule and invasions by foreign armies.

Ferelden has only begun to settle down in the last few centuries, and other nations, especially neighboring Orlais, still consider it a relative backwater. Relations between Ferelden and Orlais remain tense at the best of times.

"The Fereldans are a puzzle," Orlesian empress Celene I once wrote to a newly appointed ambassador in Denerim. "As a people, they are one bad day away from reverting to barbarism. They repelled invasions from Tevinter during the height of the Imperium with nothing but dogs and their own obstinate

KEY FACTS

Official Name: Kingdom of Ferelden

Demonym: Fereldan

Government: Monarchy

Capital: Denerim

Religion: Chantry (majority)

Havard, loyal disciple to Andraste, collects her ashes and carries them back to Ferelden.

-170 ANCIENT

The armies of Maferath and Andraste disperse. Maferath claims much of southern Thedas in the name of the Alamarri, taking Ferelden for himself while dividing what will become Orlais, the nation of Nevarra, and several Marcher cities between his sons.

-165 ANCIENT

Ferelden's harsh climates have shaped a hardy people who value strength and courage over wealth and entitlement.

disposition. They are the coarse, willful, dirty, disorganized people who somehow gave rise to our prophet, ushered in an era of enlightenment, and toppled the greatest empire in history."

LIFE IN FERELDEN

In Ferelden, strength and courage are set above heritage and wealth. Any Fereldan man or woman worth their salt can make something of themselves. Nobles are respected, even revered, but to the common person they are not untouchable. Respect must be earned, and nowhere in the world is there a people as ready to demand their due as in Ferelden.

Fereldan farms, called freeholds, are run by families who have worked their land for generations and would spill blood before giving up their lot. What servants there are receive pay for their services and are free to come and go as they please. Even elves, who live a ghettoized life in urban alienages and often work the lowliest jobs, have a freedom in Ferelden that Orlais would never afford them. Fereldan elves are proud of this, and many say they would rather be poor and free than live as well-treated "slaves."

THE CHANTRY & FERELDEN'S ANIMIST ROOTS

Signs of Ferelden's Alamarri barbarian roots persist, even as the Chantry has taken firm hold of the nation's social order. While chantries stand in almost every village and town, signs of the old deities remain a common sight in Ferelden.

Animist symbols still adorn artwork and clothing. Images of wolves commonly decorate military uniforms and flags. Village elders repurpose the old religion's teachings as cautionary bedtime stories for children. Even some old statues and temples still

For their service in battle against the Imperium, Maferath gives the elves a new homeland in the Dales. The Long Walk begins as a massive influx of elves settle the region.

Archon Hessarian converts to the Cult of the Maker and reveals Maferath's treachery.

-165 ANCIENT

-160 ANCIENT

stand, though many are falling apart or have been converted to other purposes.

The old ways are disappearing, but the Chantry does not demand their removal or promote hatred against the old deities. The Maker simply stands above them.

POLITICS & CLASS

A king or queen leads the monarchy that governs Ferelden from Denerim, the capital.

The nation is broken into provinces, called teyrnirs. A teyrn or teyrna governs each, with the exception of Denerim, where the king or queen oversees local affairs along with those affecting the whole of the nation.

Arls, the equivalent of mayors, watch over cities and arlings. Bannorns divide the Fereldan countryside. A bann rules over each such landholding.

The Fereldan penchant for freedom has grown into a laissez-faire attitude towards law enforcement and acceptable social behavior. Fereldans are largely expected to take care of themselves.

In Denerim, the King's Patrol is intended to defend the city and keep order more than enforce the letter of the law. While the patrol is quick to investigate the worst offenses, it will ignore most others and leave citizens to their own devices.

Commerce too is largely unregulated, so long as taxes are paid. Businesses like brothels and gambling halls are more than tolerated.

Social standing in Fereldan cities is stratified according to proximity to the seat of local authority. The upper classes tend to live closer to the center of a community—often the castle residence of a local politician. Lower classes live closer to the city walls. Living outside the city walls indicates a position of still lower standing.

FERELDAN TITLES OF NOBILITY

Masculine Form	Feminine Form	Proper Form of Address
King	Queen	Your Majesty
Prince	Princess	Your Highness
Teyrn	Teyrna	Your Lordship/Ladyship
Arl	Arlessa	My Lord/Lady
Bann	Bann	My Lord/Lady
Lord	Lady	My Lord/Lady
Knight	Knight	Ser (for both sexes)

The Alamarri abandon Maferath, and southern Thedas collapses into anarchy.

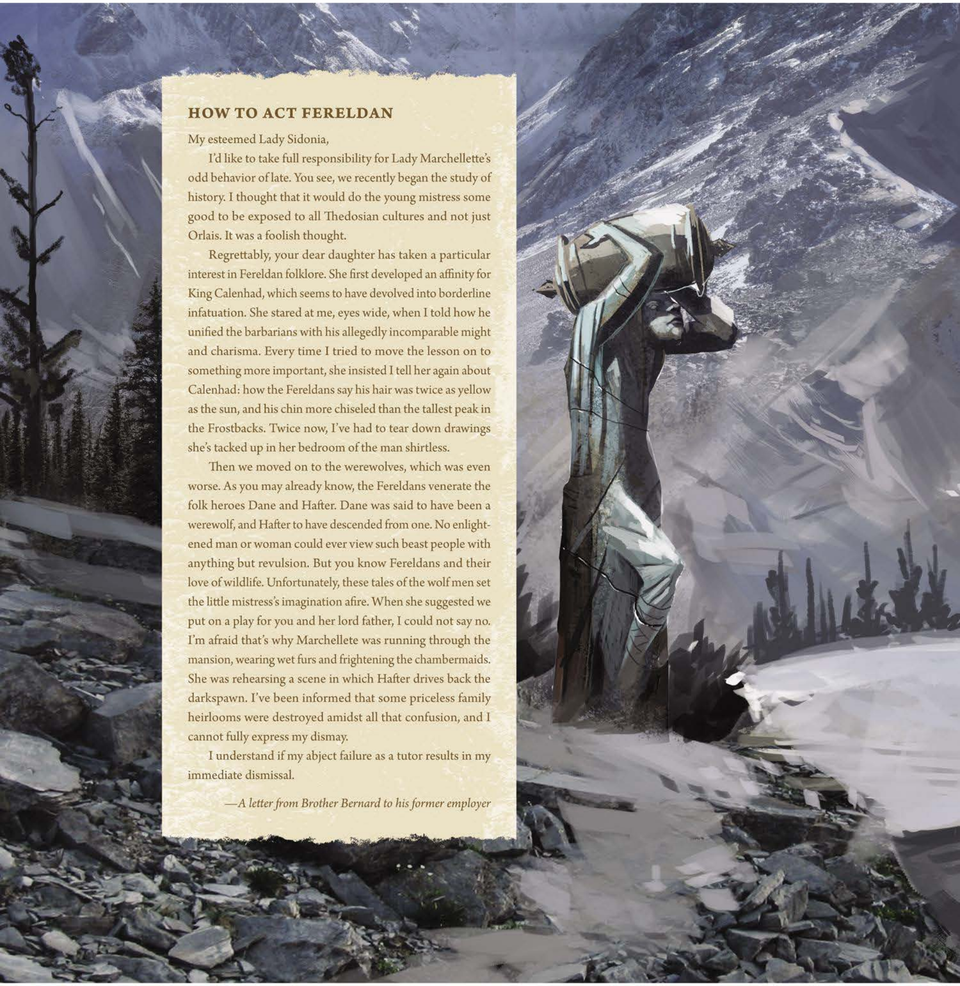
-160 ANCIENT

Hessarian converts the Imperium to Andrastianism, beginning the Transfiguration.

-160 ANCIENT

The Ciriane in present-day Orlais unite in a moment known as the Grand Unification.

-155 ANCIENT



HOW TO ACT FERELDAN

My esteemed Lady Sidonia,

I'd like to take full responsibility for Lady Marchellette's odd behavior of late. You see, we recently began the study of history. I thought that it would do the young mistress some good to be exposed to all Thedosian cultures and not just Orlais. It was a foolish thought.

Regrettably, your dear daughter has taken a particular interest in Fereldan folklore. She first developed an affinity for King Calenhad, which seems to have devolved into borderline infatuation. She stared at me, eyes wide, when I told how he unified the barbarians with his allegedly incomparable might and charisma. Every time I tried to move the lesson on to something more important, she insisted I tell her again about Calenhad: how the Fereldans say his hair was twice as yellow as the sun, and his chin more chiseled than the tallest peak in the Frostbacks. Twice now, I've had to tear down drawings she's tacked up in her bedroom of the man shirtless.

Then we moved on to the werewolves, which was even worse. As you may already know, the Fereldans venerate the folk heroes Dane and Hafter. Dane was said to have been a werewolf, and Hafter to have descended from one. No enlightened man or woman could ever view such beast people with anything but revulsion. But you know Fereldans and their love of wildlife. Unfortunately, these tales of the wolf men set the little mistress's imagination afire. When she suggested we put on a play for you and her lord father, I could not say no. I'm afraid that's why Marchellete was running through the mansion, wearing wet furs and frightening the chambermaids. She was rehearsing a scene in which Hafter drives back the darkspawn. I've been informed that some priceless family heirlooms were destroyed amidst all that confusion, and I cannot fully express my dismay.

I understand if my abject failure as a tutor results in my immediate dismissal.

—*A letter from Brother Bernard to his former employer*

The Alamarri in Ferelden fall into a long series of internal wars as various warlords attempt to replace Maferath.

-135 ANCIENT

Andraste's ashes disappear, revealed ages later to have been stored away at the Temple of Sacred Ashes in Haven.

-135 ANCIENT

A lonely statue of Andraste's disciple Havard keeps watch over a remote valley in the Frostbacks.

Andraste's disciples create the Chant of Light, collecting her teachings into hymns.

-130 ANCIENT

The Chant's popularity spreads.

-125 ANCIENT

Hessarian dies in his sleep. Many in the eastern and southern provinces push for secession, fearing his successor, Orentius, will restore the Old Gods and their clergy.

-125 ANCIENT

DOGS & WEREWOLVES

Outside their borders, the people of Ferelden are often referred to as "dog lords." They prize canines, omnipresent from the largest cities to the most remote outposts. Many Fereldans breed them as companions and often for use in battle. The hyper-intelligent mabari are particularly common among the ranks of Fereldan armies.

Fereldans even consider it good luck to feed a stray dog.

"In every civilized corner of Thedas, an astute observer will notice dogs employed in hunting game, keeping barns and storehouses free of vermin, herding livestock, and guarding homes. They're even used as beasts of burden in the mountains," Chantry scholar Ferdinand Genitivi once wrote. "It is simply that Fereldans show appreciation for the work that our dogs do. And perhaps the reason for that is tangled up in mythology."

Ferelden is an Alamarri word meaning "fertile valley."

The importance of dogs in Fereldan culture traces its roots to werewolves: mythical wolf-men who factor heavily in Fereldan lore. The first teyrn, an Alamarri named Hafter, was said to be the son of a werewolf, and half the nobles in Ferelden consider him an ancestor.

Curiously, though, history also remembers conflict with werewolves. Fear that werewolves made a deal with a demon, and were emerging from the forests disguised as men, led to a bloody period in the Black Age. Suspicion of friends and neighbors ran rampant across Ferelden, and many were killed for displaying any sign they might be hiding something.

The use of dogs as guards became common then, as they were said to detect werewolves by their smell. Eventually, the humans quelled the werewolf threat, although this period is still considered a dark chapter in Fereldan history. There are many tales of the battles that took place. Perhaps most noteworthy was the invasion of the streets of Gwaren, where over a quarter of the city was slaughtered in a single night.

Rebellions stir in the east as Rivain attempts to split off from the Imperium. Many city-states in the Free Marches come to Rivain's aid.

-120 ANCIENT

The Inquisition is founded around this time. The loose association of Andrastian hard-liners hunt heretics and mages in the name of the Maker.

-100 ANCIENT

DANE & THE WEREWOLF

Let me sing of heroes and honor lost and found,
Of monsters and men in all forms,
Of Dane, hunter without peer,
Feared by the forests of Ferelden,
Who one autumn morn spied
A hart of pure white in beam of warmest sun,
A prize for huntsman's spear.

Through the greenwood they ran, hart and hunter
Bringing the stag to spear at last in a long-forgotten grove,
Heedless that the chase had waked a hunger in the golden wood,
A werewolf, a creature with mind of man,
Lured by the hunt and come forth to lay claim
To the hart as rightful tribute,
Drawn by the scent of cooling blood.

In the silence the two hunters held.
Dane, spear-armed against the wolf with all his brood,
Knew with sinking heart he was lost,
Steeled for the winding roads of the Fade.
Then the beast spoke, human-like in voice,
"You have taken this stag from my woods, and my pack,
But nothing comes without a cost."

The wolf pack circled, ever closer, and he
Who felled boars and bears with his bright blade
Knew fear. They spoke his name in roars
Like gravestones, offering a beast's bargain.
"Die here, huntsman, alone
And forgotten, or take my place amongst the wolves
As I take your place amongst men."

Thus a bargain struck,
And Dane the wolf pack served in wolfen form,
And the werewolf to his family sped, as Dane,
One year and a day all told.
But some things cannot be repent,
Some coinage cannot be unspent,
When hearts are wagered, a fissure rent.

—*From the saga* Dane and the Werewolf, *as recorded by the minstrel Uccam, 4:85 Black*

NEVARRA

KEY FACTS

Official Name: Kingdom of Nevarra
Demonym: Nevarran
Government: Monarchy
Capital: Nevarra City
Religion: Chantry (majority)

Nevarra is a nation in central Thedas bordered by Orlais to the west and the Free Marches to the east. It is known best for its unique treatment of death and strong royal dynasties.

Nevarra was actually one of the largest Marcher city-states before it expanded to become a full nation in the Exalted Age. Bolstered by deep coffers and a strategic, central location, Nevarra has grown over the last few ages into a power that many claim rivals Orlais. While the capital lies in the original city of Nevarra, the city of Cumberland has seen rapid growth in the last century to become one of the largest in Thedas. Cumberland's advantageous position on the Minanter River means it hosts the bulk of Nevarra's trade.

The ruling Pentaghasts are among Nevarra's most famous families. Many generations have taken the throne, earning a reputation for a seemingly hereditary aptitude for military strategy. Under Pentaghast leadership, Nevarra fought and won a long war with Orlais for control over the mineral-rich hills in Nevarra's western region. This victory over Orlais brought Nevarra much of its prestige and wealth, although the indigenous peoples of these western lands are still not fond of the Nevarran presence.

HISTORY OF NEVARRAN POLITICS

By the Glory Age, rule of the Nevarran city-state had changed hands several times. Ineffectual leadership and infighting resulted in a poor populace lagging far behind other Free Marcher city-states. Ionas, the last ruler before the First Pentaghast Dynasty, ruled Nevarra for several decades and was in failing health. His friends and advisers took advantage of his weakened state, suggesting courses of action that benefited themselves rather than the city. Nevarra was destroying itself from the inside.

Many Nevarrans, including some of Ionas's closest advisers, felt that Nevarra could not survive on its own. They thought

The Imperium abandons the east after the disastrous Battle of Temerin

-53 ANCIENT

The Kingdom of Rivain is founded.

-44 ANCIENT

Cassandra Pentaghast, famed Seeker and hand of the Divine, is a member of the sprawling and powerful Pentaghast clan.

it best for Nevarra to cede itself to Orlais or one of the more powerful city-states like Starkhaven. Rumors swirled that some advisers had brokered deals with either Orlais or Starkhaven and would be rewarded if the cession of Nevarra's lands occurred.

Fortunately for Nevarra, this never came to pass. Caspar Pentaghast, originally of a small town not far from Nevarra called Hunter Fell, plotted to depose Ionas before he ran Nevarra into the ground or delivered it to its enemies. In the middle of the Glory Age, Pentaghast seized the Nevarran throne, and under his leadership, the city-state's fortunes turned around.

FAMILY DYNASTIES

Three royal dynasties have since persisted in Nevarra's storied history:

First Pentaghast Dynasty: King Caspar's bloodline held the Nevarran throne from Glory well into the Exalted Age, about three hundred years all told. In that time, Pentaghast rule was only temporarily interrupted when Orlais occupied a Blight-weakened Nevarra. It was famously retaken by Caspar II, still one of the nation's most revered Pentaghast kings.

First Van Markham Dynasty: In the aftermath of the Fourth Blight, Nevarran general Tylus Van Markham, who claimed to descend from Kordillus Drakon of Orlais, took the opportunity to stir the populace against the Pentaghasts. Van Markham claimed the royal family had abandoned the values that once made them great, and leveled accusations of decadence and corruption. Anti-Pentaghast sentiment grew, and Van Markham rallied the populace to overthrow the Pentaghasts so he could take the throne for himself. King Nestor Pentaghast was killed, stabbed sixteen times while seated on his throne. The surviving Pentaghasts fled to Hunter Fell. Under Tylus and three more Van Markham kings, Nevarra aggressively expanded from a city-state to a full-fledged nation, occupying large swaths of Orlesian land.

Second Pentaghast Dynasty: Deep in the Steel Age, the last Van Markham king died, leaving no sons. His daughter married a Pentaghast, merging the two powerful families. Together they solidified Nevarra's status as a significant power in Thedas, and the family has ruled Nevarra under the Pentaghast name for generations, with the Van Markhams enjoying an equally lofty status among the nobility.

-30 ANCIENT — **The city-state of Antiva expands to become a nation.**

-25 ANCIENT — **Emerius, one of the last strongholds of the Imperium, falls in a slave rebellion. It is renamed Kirkwall.**

-15 ANCIENT — **The dwarves of Orzammar seal the last of the Deep Roads, cutting off Kal-Sharok, which is believed lost.**

Uncertain Future for the Throne

The current king is Markus Pentaghast. The old man, of waning health and sanity, has come under fire from many political opponents who believe his Mortalitasi advisers are ruling the country through him. Members of the Pentaghast and Van Markham clans are lining up to replace Markus upon his inevitable death.

Some Nevarran noble families believe that both the Pentaghasts and the Van Markhams have held power for too long, and that it is time for them to step aside. The most direct successor to the throne is Ferdinand Pentaghast, the younger brother of Markus. Ferdinand is a legendary dragon hunter known more for his writing on the many uses of the beasts' blood than politicking. He is also quite old and has expressed no public interest in assuming the throne.

Neither brother has any known offspring.

DEATH IN NEVARRA

One of the most unique aspects of Nevarran culture is their perspective on death. While most Andrastian nations burn their dead in tribute to Andraste's martyrdom on the stake, Nevarrans mummify their corpses.

Nevarrans believe that when a soul crosses the Fade at death, it displaces a Fade spirit. Caspar Pentaghast's personal adviser, a Tevinter mage named Vitus Fabria, founded the Mortalitasi order

CASPAR THE MAGNIFICENT

King Caspar the Magnificent saw one hundred and twenty-seven summers before he finally left for eternal slumber beneath our great kingdom. Even on that last day, the king sparred with his great-grandson, Mathas the Glorious, and bested him. King Caspar showed no signs of weakness or decrepitude in his advanced age, and proved more than a match for the much younger man. Caspar met every blow Mathas delivered, and returned each with twice the vigor.

In the end, the great king threw his grandson to the ground, and with one stroke of his sword, sheared the beard clean off Mathas's chin. "You are a Pentaghast," the king said. "Have some care for your appearance."

Chastised, Mathas sent for his attendants, and bade them to bathe and groom him. Thereafter, his chin was always shaved obsessively close to the skin.

As for the king, he retired to his chambers for his afternoon nap. When it came time for supper, the servants were unable to rouse him. And that is how King Caspar the Magnificent, sixty years the supreme lord of Nevarra, finally set aside his crown.

—*From* The Pentaghast Kings of Nevarra, *a growing book of family legends*

Each Nevarran tomb is as unique as the family buried there.

The Cult of the Maker spreads in the south. One of Andraste's most fervent followers is the young king of Orlais, Kordillus Drakon.

-11 ANCIENT

Kordillus Drakon unites the tribes of the Heartlands and is crowned emperor of the new nation of Orlais.

-3 ANCIENT

The crypts of Nevarran families whose bloodlines die out may be left in disrepair and are susceptible to grave robbers.

of mages and first preached the idea. The Mortalitasi believe mummifying corpses to keep them intact provides a safe host for the displaced Fade spirits.

The mummified corpses are placed in massive, elaborate tombs, and the grandest of these come complete with gardens, bathhouses, and ballrooms. Wealthy Nevarrans begin construction on their own tombs while young, and add to them as they grow older. Outside of Nevarra City stands the Grand Necropolis. It appears almost as a city in itself, complete with mansions and great palaces, although it is utterly silent and kept only for the dead.

It is common for nobles to take Mortalitasi advisers, and rumors persist of noble involvement in secret necromantic cults. Outside of Nevarra, inflated stories of ancestor worship and obsession with the dead have become Nevarran stereotypes.

The Nevarran practice of mummification increases the risk of corpse possession.

EXHUMING BODIES BY MOONLIGHT

My tenure as ambassador to the Nevarran court began, appropriately enough, with a death. I arrived to find my predecessor and intended mentor, Sifas Carrenter, had died in his sleep. Not unexpected, given his age. Instead of a cremation, the Mortalitasi were summoned for him, those gray-robed mages who seem to be everywhere in the palace.

I was warned of the Mortalitasi in Starkhaven. Some cautioned me about their political prowess, learned from sitting at the king's feet for generations. Others talked about the Mortalitasi like they were ghoulish surgeons in leather aprons, exhuming bodies by moonlight in their Grand Necropolis.

The Mortalitasi who spoke to me was a polite, tawny-haired woman who smelled strongly of soap. She explained that Carrenter had earned the honor of being preserved and interred in the Necropolis. It seems a barbaric practice, but I knew that demanding a cremation would have made me—and more importantly, Starkhaven—lose face in Nevarra.

Instead, my thanks seemed to please her. She described some of their rites. Though she wouldn't speak of the greater mysteries, even a glimpse into their arts put my hair on end. But I held my peace. The Mortalitasi are linked to the throne by blood. If I die in my office, like Carrenter, my body will be in their hands. In a land where death and politics are intertwined, one should be polite.

—Galen Vedas, Starkhaven ambassador to Nevarra, 9:6 Dragon

ORLAIS

Orlais is a country in southwest Thedas known for its culture of extravagant nobility and as the birthplace of the Chantry. Ambitious and wealthy, Orlais is the most powerful human nation in Thedas.

KEY FACTS

Official Name: Orlesian Empire
Demonym: Orlesian
Government: Monarchy
Capital: Val Royeaux
Religion: Chantry (majority)

The Orlesian capital, Val Royeaux, is home to the Chantry's Grand Cathedral, the center of the Andrastian religion's power. Over multiple Blights, the Orlesians have used the Chantry to expand their influence beyond the nation's impressive borders, notably to the north into Tevinter territory and southeast through Ferelden.

Orlais has a large noble class famed for its excess, and in particular, the fashionable use of cosmetics and elaborate masks. Their clothing too tends to be complicated and colorful. Orlais

Drakon formalizes the Cult of the Maker, creating the Chantry.

is also home to spectacular architecture. The Grand Cathedral, as well as the University of Orlais, both in Val Royeaux, are noteworthy for their grandiose style and construction. The Cathedral, originally a fortress, was converted to a place of worship with ample gold and stained glass.

THE ORLESIAN EMPIRE & ITS DETRACTORS

Ages of expansionist aggression have done little to endear Orlais to its neighbors. Much of Thedas looks at Orlais with disrespect and even contempt. The Orlesians have squandered favor with the Free Marches, battled with Nevarra, and invaded Ferelden. They also crushed the Dales, the last true home of elves in Thedas, in the name of Andraste.

Orlais is particularly at odds with the Tevinter Imperium. The Imperium and its Imperial Chantry embrace magic, which permeates all aspects of Tevinter society. Orlais, and by extension the Chantry, has sought instead to suppress and control magic, seeing it as dangerous and corruptible.

Perhaps the only people with whom Orlais has maintained goodwill are the dwarves of Orzammar. Orlais has long shared a border with dwarven territory in the Frostbacks and benefits from trade in lyrium and minerals, as well as smithing. The Chantry's templars, who use lyrium to bolster their power, are especially reliant on these strong ties with the dwarves.

In few places is the Chantry's influence more ubiquitous than Orlais.

DIVINE AGE

Divine Justinia I is named the first Divine of the new Chantry.

1:1 DIVINE

The Old God Zazikel awakens. The Second Blight begins in the Anderfels.

1:5 DIVINE

Vendors hawk food and wares in city markets, driving local economies from Kirkwall to Val Royeaux.

THE GRAND GAME

Among the Orlesian nobility, status and appearance are set above all things. Orlesian culture is renowned for its infighting, with every family engaging on some level in what's known as the Grand Game.

The object of the Game is to one-up rival nobles. Ambitious members of the country's bloated aristocracy maneuver within social circles to increase their own influence. The rules are simple: anything is acceptable, so long as they don't get caught. A nobleman could get away with murder, so long as there's no evidence of his involvement. It is important, however, for the nobility to at least suspect his involvement. Indeed, this suspicion is liable to earn the nobleman respect and standing. Should actual evidence come to light, however, the rest of the nobility would immediately condemn him for his immoral act, if only to better their own standing. This Game often breeds more losers than winners.

The extravagance of the Orlesian upper class extends to the design of everything from clothing to furniture.

Outside of Orlais, it is believed that the lower classes must find the Game contemptible. In truth, most Orlesians aspire to be nobility—anyone, even the lowliest peasant, could conceivably join their ranks if they become wealthy enough. A lucky merchant with a powerful patron could gain a title through the Council of Heralds, their commoner status forgotten to make way for entry into the elite classes. This is exceptionally rare, but still a possibility. Thus, many believe Orlais is a kind of meritocracy. In reality, the faint hope of achieving great things is enough to keep the poor preoccupied and the rich in power.

THE PERILS OF BARD LIFE

As a bard, you are welcome anywhere in Orlais. Doors are opened to you with generous smiles, their wearers confident that no one would falsely pretend to such a title for fear of retribution. Your slightest request is immediately seen to. Your services are expensive and yet actively sought, and those who cannot afford them beg only to not have your displeasure turn their way.

One day, however, you will awaken. You will realize the smiles are false, and behind them lies revenge. At the first moment of weakness, your brother and sister bards will be unleashed upon you like a pack of hounds, and you will realize they are not your brothers and sisters at all. For all your fancy intrigue, you have spent your life creating nothing of worth. You have been swallowed by the web of your own deceits, and the Game of which you believed yourself master? It moves on without you, uncaring.

—From a letter signed "Sister Nightingale"

CHEVALIERS

Many of the nobility in Orlais are members of its infamous knightly order, the chevaliers. Joining the chevaliers is a good way to improve social standing, a useful path for lesser, landless nobles and noble children not in line to inherit. The chevaliers include both men and women, although women are not often encouraged to take up arms.

The legendary training of the chevaliers is harsh, instilling in its knights a fierce discipline and code of honor that surpasses even value in their own lives. The chevaliers are said to be fearless and their loyalty to the empire absolute. The penalty for dishonor is death, something a chevalier should welcome if he or she has failed the order.

Emperor Drakon calls on mages to use their magic against the Blight. The mages prove themselves to be effective allies in battle.

1:5 DIVINE

THE MASKS OF ORLAIS

A bare face in Orlais is considered gauche, especially in the presence of a foreigner or, Maker forbid, a commoner.

The Orlesian nobility is "prone to wearing very elaborate masks in public," Genitivi once observed. "These masks are hereditary and identify one's family almost as uniquely as the heraldry on a crest." One family might be associated with a lion crest, and matching lion masks will identify them in public. Retainers and servants wear a simpler form of a family's mask. Family symbols are well known among the Orlesian public, and anyone attempting to wear a mask that doesn't belong to their house runs the risk of a quick death if discovered.

Wearing makeup is another popular tradition for both men and women in Orlais. Even chevaliers may wear cosmetics. There is both masculine and feminine makeup, although outsiders may have trouble telling the difference. Makeup can be a strong indicator of social standing. The quality and rarity of one's makeup—uncommon hues and consistencies are prized—speak volumes of one's status.

Chevaliers hold absolute power over those of commoner rank. The brutality of certain members of the chevaliers is infamous, and considering that the knighthood is above legal reproach, the lower Orlesian classes fear the knighthood as much as those of higher standing adore it.

The Imperium abandons the Anderfels in a bid to defend itself against surfacing darkspawn.

1:5 DIVINE

Emperor Drakon wins a hard-fought victory against the darkspawn at the Battle of Cumberland, saving numerous cities.

1:16 DIVINE

ORLESIAN TITLES OF NOBILITY

Masculine Form	Feminine Form	Proper Form of Address	Usage
Emperor	Empress	Your Radiance, Your Imperial Majesty	Title for the Orlesian ruler and his or her spouse.
Prince	Princess	Your Imperial Highness	Title for direct family members of the ruler, including their children and siblings.
Grand Duke	Grand Duchess	Your Highness	Title for those who were once princes or princesses but are no longer directly related to the emperor. Not hereditary.
Duke	Duchess	Your Grace	The highest noble title.
Marquis	Marquise	Your Grace	Noble title. Lower than duke or duchess.
Comte	Comtess	Your Lordship/Ladyship	Another noble title. Lower than marquis or marquise.
Baron	Baroness	Your Lordship/Ladyship	Lowest noble title, often considered the equivalent of lord or lady.
Lord	Lady	Monsieur/Madame, "de" or "du" honorific	Acceptable address for any nobility, no matter the rank, but not royalty.
Chevalier	Dame	Ser	Title reserved for the order of Orlesian knights.

THE RISE OF EMPRESS CELENE

Under the rule of the legendary Kordillus Drakon, the fledgling nation of Orlais rose to prominence. He used the Second Blight to expand its borders and the influence of the Chantry.

After a group of nobles objected to differing standards of heraldry across the Orlesian Empire, the Council of Heralds was formed to ensure that any new heraldic crests be met with consensus.

While Orlais is nowhere near as large as it was under Drakon, it remains the most powerful nation in Thedas, and Drakon's legacy continues to heavily influence Orlesian laws and social customs.

The current Orlesian ruler, Empress Celene, ascended to the throne in 9:20 Dragon after the death of her uncle Florian the previous year. Many accused Celene, only sixteen at the time, of arranging the assassination of her uncle. These same nobles also consider her claim to the title tenuous at best.

Celene's ascendancy marked a period of intense struggle in the empire, as nobles positioned themselves to overthrow her. Most said Celene was too young and inexperienced to hold power. She hinted at the possibility of marriage to several powerful families, and while ultimately marrying no one, Celene has maintained alliances with families of would-be suitors to hold the throne for herself.

An adept player of the Game, the progressive Celene has grown into an amateur scholar and a patron of both education and the arts. She inspired something of a cultural renaissance in the Orlesian Empire, and many call her "the Lioness."

Today, there are still many nobles who consider Celene's rule illegitimate. As she grows older and the likelihood of an heir by birth decreases, the movement to replace her grows.

The Chantry and the Inquisition sign the Nevarran Accord. Senior members of the Inquisition form the Seekers of Truth.

1:20 DIVINE

JESHAVIS, MOTHER OF ORLAIS

It is said we owe much to the Sons of Betrayal. Three brothers were charged with girding against an Imperium in wait. And in mourning Andraste, we tribes of the crescent willingly bartered diversity for solidarity. Tevinter would not be defeated in Our Lady's lifetime, but would be balanced against for lifetimes to come.

While a Son of Betrayal named the fields "Orlais," it was Jeshavis, his wife, who shaped what we are. Her hatreds were older, bound to tradition. All our hatreds were abandoned so we would call strangers kin and stand as one against the Imperium. Greater her spite for how necessary the cost, because she knew we had a choice in that day, or no choice the next. She brought the marriage that wed tribe within tribe, but promised an untold vengeance of her own: if we stand against outsiders, we stand for ourselves. She would not suffer the rule of Alamarri, son or no son of Betrayal or Prophet.

Jeshavis plied brother against brother in turn, then named both as partners in crimes against faith. With artful turns she invited invasion, then crafted rebellion against the courts she inspired. Brother would kill brother and be killed in turn, two liberations that she would then own. Eight generations before the empire, before Drakon, here were the seeds of elegance to come. Jeshavis, twice married to Sons of Betrayal, twice widowed, our first chieftain born from us, of what would become true Orlais—where we venerate faith and the beauty of sacrifice, with daggers well hidden but well within reach.

It is true, we owe much to the Sons of Betrayal, for they were the tools that a master cast down. Let others claim credit for birthing the nation. Jeshavis claims nothing and gave us the Game.

This text was translated from Oer Gyðja Jethvis, *a highly romanticized account of the first gyðja, or female chieftain, of the unified Ciriane tribes of Orlais. The region and people would later coalesce under Drakon into the modern nation of Orlais. Many culturally distinct communities were forcibly merged during the rule of Maferath and his sons, ostensibly to create more efficient barriers against the likelihood of a Tevinter return to conquest. The effects of this relocation can still be observed in many Orlesian, Nevarran, and Free Marcher traditions.*

—Collected and excerpted by Philliam, a bard!

ANTIVA

KEY FACTS

Official Name: Antiva
Demonym: Antivan
Government: Plutocracy
Capital: Antiva City
Religion: Chantry (majority)

Romantic Antiva is known for its wine, sailing, and rich merchant history. Its true leaders, if it has any, are a body of argumentative merchant princes who have far more power than the weak monarchy that officially rules the nation. The merchant elite prefers to sue for peace when entangled in a war, which is not often, as the nation is well known for its neutrality and passive approach to cross-border conflicts.

While Antiva is not a military power by any means—there is no standing army—the nation keeps the deadliest assassins in Thedas in the House of Crows. The guild's fame is such that entire kingdoms fear their silent blades, and few have dared take on the nation in open war. The country's neutral political stance also helps.

Antiva is relatively prosperous, thanks largely to aggressive trading practices. Its only real resources come from the wine trade, fueled by its fruitful vineyards. Antiva would not be so rich if it were isolated from its many trading partners.

The people of Antiva are renowned for their festival culture. Holidays there tend to be celebrated with uncommon enthusiasm. Satinalia, for instance, is accompanied by wild celebration, the wearing of masks, and the naming of the town fool as ruler for the day. In more pious nations, large feasts and the giving of gifts mark the festival, with none of the extreme revelry found in Antiva.

A RICH HISTORY

Antiva's roots can be traced back to ne'er-do-wells and pirates who united, realizing a less dangerous life on land could still be lucrative. They put down stakes on the west coast of Rialto Bay, only to realize they were all but squatting on land claimed by the king of a nearby city-state called Antiva.

Over the years, a fragile understanding between the neighboring settlements gave way to a single, unified nation where the merchants ruled and the royals grew fat.

In 1:45 Divine, the Chantry came to Antiva and the teachings of Andraste took root.

The Circle of Magi is created as part of the Nevarran Accord. Mages are now formally permitted to practice magic under the close watch of the Chantry.

1:20 DIVINE

With the creation of the Circle, the Templar Order is formed to police magic use.

1:20 DIVINE

Although usually neutral, Antiva did join the city-states of the Free Marches to suppress advances by Starkhaven's King Fyruss in a war that lasted from 2:15 to 2:45 Glory. Fyruss was primarily interested in uniting the Free Marches. But his desire for expansion sent him north to Antiva to see if he might take land there also. He was unsuccessful on both fronts.

The Spread of Antivan Influence

In the Black Age, King Dario Campana wed Asha Subira Bahadur, Gana of Ayesleigh. King Dario was a weak monarch, but his queen more than made up for him. Queen Asha, the daughter of wealthy merchants, wanted Antiva to hold a stronger position in Thedosian politics, and she achieved this end by marrying off her children and grandchildren into royal and noble families across the continent. Historians sometimes call her the "Queen Mother of Thedas."

The Fourth Blight

Perhaps the darkest time in Antivan history was the Exalted Age, when the Fourth Blight ravaged the nation. It began in 5:12 Exalted, with the awakening of the Archdemon Andoral. Darkspawn surfaced in great numbers in northern parts of the continent, with most concentrated in Antiva. The entire ruling family at the time was slaughtered before the darkspawn advanced south and east to the Free Marches and Rivain.

Antiva was rid of the darkspawn following the tide-turning battle in 5:24 Exalted at the city of Ayesleigh, where the Grey Warden Garahel died striking the killing blow on Andoral. So many darkspawn were slaughtered that many in Thedas believed the darkspawn would never return. Antiva wasted little time rebuilding what was lost at great expense.

ANTIVAN CROWS

The Antivan Crows, also known as the House of Crows, are an infamous guild of spies, assassins, and thieves. They operate under the control of a secret council said to be made up of the heads of a small collection of the wealthiest families in Antiva, including some royals.

The Crows are everywhere in their home nation, but also appear outside Antiva. Often they are identifiable by their unique tattoos—a tradition taken from the Rivaini. Some Crows display their tattoos proudly, while others keep them hidden.

Various Antivan kings and queens have paid lip service to the idea of stamping the Crows out, tossing around sentiments like "menace" and "black mark on Antiva's peaceful reputation." The Crows are, after all, lawbreakers, however powerful and romanticized they may be. Nothing has come of these threats, as the fame of the Crows is widely believed to protect Antiva from outside harm. It is often said that nations avoid invading Antiva because, while their armies might find little resistance, the leaders of those armies and those who sent them will almost certainly end up dead. A target of the Crows rarely lives long.

THE CROWS & QUEEN MADRIGAL

The first Crow refused to speak, even when we put hot coals to the soles of his feet and peeled the skin off his face and hands with a paring knife. He opted instead to chew through his own tongue and choke to death on the blood.

The second captive repeated what we already knew: Queen Madrigal went on a hunt and did not appear for the evening's festivities. Her body was later found with four steel swords through the chest. I asked what he knew about one of the four swords being a replica of Hessarian's Sword of Mercy. He had not heard about that, or at least claimed as much. He later died on the rack, smiling slightly.

The third Crow must have realized he would not leave the dungeon alive. He seemed to hope that by angering Master Fiore, he would earn himself a quick death. The Crow tried our patience with pithy comments while Master Fiore was trying to work. At one point, he made a remark about Fiore's mother, which I shall not repeat here. I will admit to feeling admiration for his ability to retain a capacity for coherent speech, and even some wit, while under extreme duress.

Amid all his useless chatter, this third Crow did raise an important point. His guild has a reputation to uphold. They are ruthless, efficient, and discreet. How would they maintain such notoriety if agents routinely revealed the names of employers with something as "banal" as torture?

This gave me pause. I called for a halt to the session. After some thought, I stabbed the man through the heart and set the fourth and fifth Crow captives free. If there is a confession to be extracted, it will not be done with pain. I recommend we abandon this course of action.

—A report by Captain Aristide, tasked with investigating the assassination of Queen Madrigal of Antiva

Elves in the Dales do nothing as darkspawn nearly destroy the nearby Orlesian city of Montsimmard.

1:25 DIVINE

The darkspawn horde fails to overrun the Tevinter capital, Minrathous.

1:31 DIVINE

FREE MARCHES

The Free Marches is the collective name given to a group of wealthy city-states in central Thedas.

KEY FACTS

Official Name: Free Marches

Demonym: Free Marcher

Government: Varies depending on city-state

Major City-States: Kirkwall, Starkhaven, Ostwick

Religion: Chantry (majority)

Marchers are descendants from barbarian tribes, their cities standing in a loose confederation of kingdoms that rarely unites unless one of its larger neighbors becomes aggressive or a Blight necessitates a temporary union. In this event, the Marchers assemble a united military front that even the greatest power cannot ignore. Petty feuds and alliances between the cities, however, prevent them from taking cooperative action in any but the most dire matters.

The Free Marches is best known as the breadbasket of Thedas. Its farms along the banks of the great Minanter River are the source of much of the continent's food.

Among the most famous of Marcher traditions is the Grand Tourney. The giant, traveling tournament and fair moves from city to city within the Free Marches and occasionally takes its show to neighboring lands. Most of the time, the Tourney travels about and entertains the locals, but once every three years or so it finds a patron wealthy enough to sponsor a Contest of Arms. The Grand Tourney then sets down for a year and sends out a call for competitors and spectators, putting together what is often called the "Greatest Show in Thedas." There are rumors about who runs the tournament and why.

Each Marcher city-state has its own unique flavor, though they are tied together by trade and agriculture.

Drakon brings his army to relieve the embattled Grey Wardens in Weisshaupt.

1:33 DIVINE

The Wardens convert to the Chantry.

1:33 DIVINE

The Chantry and Wardens together save the badly weakened Anderfels from destruction.

1:33 DIVINE

KIRKWALL

Kirkwall is a large city-state on the edge of the Waking Sea, built into the rock face of the magnificent Vimmark Mountains. Positioned near the narrowest part of the sea, the city is a gate for nautical trade moving into and out of the heart of the continent.

Kirkwall once marked the edge of the Tevinter Imperium. Then called Emerius, it was an engine for the slave trade. The city's slaves were at that time estimated to be nearly a million in number. They produced stone and steel for the empire, toiling and dying in the city's massive foundries and quarries. "During its height," Genitivi wrote in City of Chains, "Emerius was a jewel to rival the mightiest of the Imperial cities and the greatest center of civilization outside Tevinter."

MARCHER MISCONCEPTIONS

My dear Empress Celene,

I agree! It is strange how some people view the Free Marches. On a map, they see its name emblazoned on the vales south of the Minanter River and assume it to be a nation just as Ferelden is. They imagine a single ruler, a single army, and a common culture, but nothing could be further from the truth!

Our dour, serious folk in Tantervale are not at all like the wild revelers of Wycome, who in turn are nothing like the self-important traders of Kirkwall. We are many nations squashed under one name on a map because the truth won't fit inside the borders.

A lovely saying I heard once: "We have a prince in Starkhaven, a margrave in Ansburg, a teyrn in Ostwick, and a viscount in Kirkwall . . . yet we accept no king in the Free Marches." At least, not since Fyruss appointed himself king seven centuries ago, which was immediately and unanimously opposed by our many great nations. We may only come together to face a common enemy, but when we do, we're a formidable ragtag bunch. Did you know that Grey Warden Garahel also united us during the Exalted Age? We marched together proudly to defeat the darkspawn at Ayesleigh . . . and immediately afterwards returned to our petty bickering.

The most important thing to know about the Free Marches is that we're free. We determine our own destiny, and that pleases us. Beyond that, the only other time we coalesce is when Grand Tourney comes to town. Then we boldly express our pride to any foreigner who'll listen. We'll kiss freedom on the lips and even lock arms with a proud Starkhavener! Alas, it lasts only a day, but there's no harm in that, right?

—A letter written by Lord Chancellor Joffrey Orrick of Tantervale to Empress Celene I, 9:29 Dragon

The city freed itself from Tevinter's grip sometime after the First Blight. As the Imperium struggled to rebuild, its borders receded, and the city's slaves rose up. Anarchy ensued. The city was renamed Kirkwall after its jet stone cliffs. The city-state became famous for its revolving leadership after it gained independence, as warlords deposed one another with nearly the frequency of changing seasons.

When the Qunari landed in Ostwick, Kirkwall was theirs to invade. The Qunari famous attacked in the middle of the night, and, in a rare move, used saarebas to besiege the city. The scars

The Anderfels convert to the Chantry and become part of the Orlesian Empire.

The Alamarri warrior Hafter unites the tribes in Ferelden against the darkspawn.

1:33 DIVINE

1:40 DIVINE

About a third of Kirkwall is built directly into a rock face of the Vimmark Mountains. Stone structures are the norm.

of a people who spent ages in chains were ripped open under the absolute rule of the Qunari. They forcibly converted Kirkwall's citizens to the Qun and the city reverted to its former role as a center for forced labor.

"The old slave quarters of Lowtown, still intact after centuries, provided the perfect means for the Qunari to control the city's people," Brother Genitivi wrote of the occupation.

This period when the Qunari controlled Kirkwall was at least brief. Four years after the occupation, Orlesian forces entered the city and took it back. Ser Michel Lafaille, the chevalier leading the charge, was declared the city's first viscount, answering directly to the emperor.

Kirkwall remained under Orlesian jurisdiction until 8:05 Blessed, when its people rebelled and gained their independence. The title of viscount as city leader persisted.

Since its independence, Kirkwall has seen still more turmoil. In 9:21 Dragon, a viscount was forcibly removed from office for attempting to expel the templars. Then, in 9:37, the city was the site of an uprising that spurred growing conflict between mages and templars across Thedas.

Emperor Drakon dies of old age in Val Chevin.

1:45 DIVINE

Drakon is succeeded by his son Kordillus II.

1:45 DIVINE

The teachings of Andraste are popularized in Antiva.

1:45 DIVINE

Gigantic bronze statues known as the Twins of Kirkwall flank the channel carved into the city's imposing black cliff.

Kirkwall Districts

Kirkwall is divided into districts based on their physical position on the side of the mountain. Hightown was home to the highest authorities and richest nobles in the city-state. The district also housed Kirkwall's chantry and religious center until the city chantry's destruction in 9:37 Dragon at the hands of a rogue mage.

Closer to the water is Lowtown, home to the poor and common classes of Kirkwall. Many quarters in Lowtown are slums in disrepair. The city-state's elven alienage is here.

Further below Lowtown is Darktown, a network of mine and sewer shafts that form an "undercity," where criminals and others fleeing something or someone seek refuge.

Kirkwall's City Guard is a semiprofessional force of soldiers composed primarily of the youth of lesser nobility, but occasionally rounded out by conscripted peasants.

Kirkwall's roots in slavery are apparent in the structure of the city. Hightown was home to the wealthiest slavers, Lowtown its slaves, and Darktown the miners. Visitors arriving by boat are welcomed by two massive bronze statues called the Twins of Kirkwall that stand on either side of the channel. The massive chain that connects these weeping men can be raised to bar entry to the city.

STARKHAVEN

Starkhaven sits on the banks of the mighty Minanter River in a verdant, rolling valley.

The largest city in the Free Marches is also its most grand. Much has been made of Starkhaven's famed wealth and the obvious ways it is on display. Large sections of the city are decorated in fine materials like marble and gold. Ferdinand Genitivi, who traveled as much of Thedas as anyone, wrote, "Starkhaven's wealth was truly a sight to behold."

The wealthiest and richest in Starkhaven are the ruling Vaels. The proud and pious royal family keeps a magnificent marble palace in the heart of Starkhaven amid the city's numerous kingly estates. Even the path to the palace is paved in granite.

Starkhaven is not without its share of drama, however. With

Hafter defeats combined Chasind and Avvar forces to hold the Ferelden Valley. Hafter is named the valley's first teyrn.

1:50 DIVINE

The Anderfels once again declare their independence, this time from the Orlesian Empire.

1:65 DIVINE

such a rich lot, eyes are constantly on the throne. An attempt in 9:31 Dragon nearly exterminated the entire Vael family. The city is also without much Circle presence, as its tower recently burned to the ground.

Starkhaven is famous for its cuisine. Its signature dish is fish and egg pie. There are many varieties, but the dish is traditionally made using fresh-caught, deboned fish cooked in porcelain with boiled eggs, dried fruit, spices, and cream under a light crust.

Starkhaven architecture is rich with marble and other finer materials.

OTHER MARCHER CITIES

Ostwick: When the Qunari first landed in the Free Marches, it was at the city-state of Ostwick near the mouth of the Waking Sea. The city-state's famous double walls show the effect this had on its people's nerves.

Tantervale: Chantry law is all but absolute in Tantervale, earning the city its dour reputation. The city guard is obsessed with enforcement. A street urchin would get a year in the dungeon for something that would get him a pat on the back in Orlais.

Ansburg: The word "backwater" gets thrown around a lot when describing Ansburg, but this central city-state is a bustling, if not beautiful, center of agricultural trade.

Markham: Ansburg's more cultured sister city is home to one of the largest universities in Thedas, a center for agricultural research.

Hasmal: This far-flung city-state's position on the edge of the Silent Plains means a regular influx of Tevinter refugees, who are often escaped slaves.

Wycome: Widely regarded as the most free of the Free Marches, the revelry capital of Thedas is also the second-greatest importer of Antivan wine after Orlais—particularly impressive considering Wycome's population is less than a third of Val Royeaux.

Hercinia: The palatial city-state on the Amaranthine coast would be an ideal vacation spot if not for the taxes and frequent raider activity.

The last battle of the Second Blight is fought at Starkhaven.

1:95 DIVINE

Astyth the Grey is made a Paragon after sacrificing her life for the king. The Silent Sisters are formed in her memory.

1:95 DIVINE

ESTWATCH

The island of Estwatch is not technically under any jurisdiction, though that's not for lack of trying. Marcher states like Kirkwall, Starkhaven, and Hercinia have all tried and failed to claim it. But Estwatch is its own, a notoriously lawless port of call for pirates and, like the larger island of Llomerryn, held by the infamous Felicisima Armada if anyone.

The Tevinter Imperium was the first to settle the island, sometime around -880 Ancient. The Imperium fortified the largest natural bay with a defensive wall, and used the island as a harbor for repairing warships during their military and slaving campaigns against the Alamarri barbarians of southern Thedas.

Just before the First Blight, the port was in heavy use, but the political turmoil in the Imperium surrounding the Blight heavily curtailed naval campaigns in the Waking Sea. By the end of the Blight, the port at Estwatch fell into disuse. When Andraste's armies reached the island in -180 Ancient, they found the fortress completely abandoned.

Throughout the Divine and Glory Ages, the island remained unoccupied. Wreckage from ships lost in the rocks along the coast of the Free Marches washes up on the shores of the island, leading to superstitions that the island is cursed. While the island was repeatedly claimed by various cities, fear of the place meant no one established a permanent hold.

During the Storm Age, Estwatch once again saw use as a naval base. The Qunari captured it in 7:54 Storm and used it as a launching point for their attacks on the Free Marches, Nevarra, and Orlais. During the Exalted Marches, it was the site of several pitched battles. The Qunari held the island until 7:78 Storm, when the Felicisima Armada, with the backing of the New Exalted Marches, fought a titanic battle in the waters around the island. It ended with the sinking of a dreadnought and the raiders taking over the port.

A small town has sprung up around that port that has earned the name Little Llomerryn, a nod to its similarly rebellious sister city.

THE SEX LIVES OF EVERYDAY THEDOSIANS

What I find most interesting is that, despite the lack of open discussion on matters of human sexuality, there is commonality to be found on the subject in all Andrastian lands.

Typically, one's sexual habits are considered natural and separate from matters of procreation, and only among the nobility, where procreation involves issues of inheritance and the union of powerful families, is it considered of vital importance. Yet, even there, a noble who has done their duty to the family might be allowed to pursue their own sexual interests without raising eyebrows.

The view on indulging lusts with a member of the same gender varies from land to land. In Orlais, it is considered a quirk of character and nothing more. In Ferelden, it is a matter of scandal if done indiscreetly but otherwise nothing noteworthy. In Tevinter, it is considered selfish and deviant behavior among nobles, but actively encouraged with favored slaves. Nowhere is it forbidden, and sex of any kind is only considered worthy of judgment when taken to awful excess or performed in the public eye.

—*From* In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, *by Brother Genitivi*

Divine Hortensia I names the Glory Age, predicting a grand rebirth of the world after the devastation of the Blight.

Border skirmishes break out between the Dales and Orlais.

1:99 DIVINE — GLORY AGE — 2:5 GLORY

FASHION IN THEDAS

◄ **Orlais:** The quintessential Orlesian style of dress is extravagant, elaborate, and colorful. In Orlais, the quality of one's garments measures standing: the more ostentatious the clothing, the more patrician the noble. Often copied in Nevarra and the Free Marches, Orlesian fashion is the epitome of form over function.

► **Ferelden:** Fereldan garb is as practical and robust as its people. Ample use of leather and fur helps commoners withstand the nation's harsh and varied climate. Even nobles wear leather. Good fashion in Ferelden is admired for the quality of its craftsmanship over its price.

▲ **Tevinter:** Magic rules the Imperium, and their clothing reflects this. Dark robes, hoods, and light armor are commonplace in Tevinter. Some of it is practical, allowing the movement necessary to cast spells while protecting from the odd blade edge. Still, Tevinter nobles are not above the impractical, sharing some of the Orlesian love for fabric volume, if not color.

THE ANDERFELS

KEY FACTS

Official Name: Kingdom of the Anderfels

Demonym: Ander

Government: Monarchy

Capital: Hossberg

Religion: Chantry (majority)

The Anderfels is a heavily blighted region in northwest Thedas best known for its harsh terrain and being home to the Grey Wardens. The Order was first founded here, and Weisshaupt Fortress in the south remains the center of Warden leadership in Thedas.

The darkspawn are a constant and formidable threat in the Anderfels, even in the absence of a true Blight. The region's people, known as Anders, have been hardened by entire lives at war with darkspawn. They live in constant fear and vigilance of the surfacing blighted, and the nation is far enough away from the rest of Thedas that their plight is easily ignored.

The Anders are bitter neighbors of the Tevinter Imperium that once ruled the region. Anders, at best, resent their former rulers—not that the darkspawn allow them much capacity for cross-border conflict.

The Anderfels' sparse populace is largely ignored by the king at Hossberg, who focuses on maintaining order and relative comfort in the capital. Protecting the king and enforcing his law are infamous royal tribunals said to dole out justice in the name of "absolution," at least in the eyes of the Maker.

Outside the city, most Anders fend for themselves in small, largely self-sufficient villages and outposts. The closest thing rural Anders have to real authority are the Wardens, who maintain at least a token presence in even the farthest inhabited corners of the region.

Elven forces capture the Orlesian town of Red Crossing. The atrocities they are said to commit enrage humans across Thedas.

The elves capture Montsimmard, a major strategic settlement for Orlais, then march on Val Royeaux.

2:9 GLORY

2:10 GLORY

Ander summers are dangerously hot, and dust storms blowing inland during cooler months make it hard for anything to ever grow.

THE WARDEN INFLUENCE

The Grey Wardens retain their importance in the Anderfels, even as their influence wanes in other nations. Warden numbers are at their largest here, and they hold political power equal to any Fereldan teyrn or Orlesian baron.

The First Warden, who lives at Weisshaupt, ostensibly commands Grey Wardens across Thedas. However, in practice, the First Warden is too caught up in local politics to act as more than a figurehead for the Wardens, who rely on Warden-Commanders to make the big decisions for the good of their assigned territories.

The First Warden has traditionally acted as the Ander king's adviser. In recent years, however, the leader of the Wardens has been more of an outspoken critic of the status quo and the monarchy as a whole. Some speculate that the First Warden has eyes on the throne.

Grey Warden

CULTURE IN THE ANDERFELS

Aside from dust storms and darkspawn, the Anderfels is famous for its art and the relative piety of its people.

Religion plays a particularly large role in Ander life, even by Orlesian standards. Perhaps it's the air of desperation that seems to hang over the region, but the Chantry maintains a heavy, popular presence. Dedicated worship of the Maker is all but expected among Anders, and breaking the Maker's laws—by extension, the king's laws—is often punishable by death in the capital.

OUR LADY OF THE ANDERFELS

"A land filled with wonders like the Merdaine, with its gigantic white statue of Our Lady carved into its face, her hands outstretched and bearing an eternal flame." Genitivi's words, brief as they were, inspired me. This stone prophet sounded magnificent. I had to see her for myself.

I trekked up the Imperial Highway, concealing my identity and taking care not to seem like a foreigner. At Vol Dorma, a neglected road led west. Soon the dry land gave way to absolute desolation. Red earth. Bones. Blowing sand stripped my face raw. When it cleared, I could see for miles—not that there was anything to see. The few settlements I encountered were populated with derelicts and Chantry zealots. They warned me of worse trials, should I continue to the Merdaine.

Eventually I turned back, opting for a smaller statue in a place the Maker hadn't abandoned.

—Brother Berard, Perendale Chantry cleric

Few make the pilgrimage to see the magnificent white statue of Our Lady, carved into the face of the Merdaine near Weisshaupt, but this wonder's fame is widespread. Outside the region, much smaller Ander sculptures are among the most prized and sought-after art pieces in all of Thedas. The sculptures are especially popular within circles of the Orlesian nobility. Members have been known to pay exorbitant prices for exemplary pieces. This has been a subject of great controversy in the Anderfels, as artists don't see much, if any, of the money their work yields. Most of the proceeds go toward the crooked members of the dwarven Merchants Guild as "handling fees."

Divine Renata I calls for a holy war against the elves. This becomes known as the Exalted March of the Dales.

2:10 GLORY

In Ferelden, Hafter's grandson Teyrn Caedmon declares himself king. A civil war begins in opposition.

2:10 GLORY

Tevinter construction frequently incorporates magic. Foundations of important structures may be raised directly out of the earth by mages.

TEVINTER IMPERIUM

KEY FACTS

Official Name: Tevinter Imperium

Demonym: Tevinter

Government: Magocracy

Capital: Minrathous

Religion: Imperial Chantry (majority)

The Tevinter Imperium is a coastal nation in northern Thedas known for its pro-magic culture and once-vast rule over much of the continent.

In Tevinter culture, might makes right, and the society's mage leaders, known as magisters, do as they please. It was the Tevinters who destroyed the legendary elven city of Arlathan and who first took the elves as slaves, resulting in the death of elven culture. Slavery in the Imperium is still actively practiced.

The ancient Tevinter magisters are also blamed for the creation of the darkspawn and the start of the Blights, as they are said to have turned the Golden City black by trying to enter it. The story of their hubris is a cornerstone of Chantry faith.

Ages ago, the Imperium controlled nearly all of Thedas. Several Exalted Marches and a protracted war with the Qunari in Seheron led to the Imperium's decline. While still relatively powerful, the modern Imperium is a shadow of what it once was.

Because of its history as a conqueror, the role the magisters played in starting the Blights, and the current Schism with the Divine in Orlais, the Tevinter Imperium is the most maligned and demonized nation in Thedas. It is virtually impossible to find writings from Tevinter outside its borders that have not been heavily altered or outright forged. To most Thedosians it is a corrupt and degenerate magocracy that must be feared until it can be converted.

Tevinters themselves view the rest of Thedas as barely civilized savages who lack proper reverence for tradition and respect for authority.

Dragons feature prominently in Tevinter, decorating everything from ancient art and architecture to modern public buildings. The Old Gods of the ancient magisters were depicted as dragons, and even when their worship was banned with the Cult of the Maker, the dragon remained a defining symbol of the Imperium.

Starkhaven's King Fyruss, backed by Tevinter allies, attempts to conquer the Free Marches and found his own empire.

2:15 GLORY

Caedmon is killed at the Battle of Valmorn Hills. The fight for power over the region begins. This period is known as the War of Crowns.

2:18 GLORY

Tevinter Circles were built in the ruins of ancient temples to the Old Gods.

TEVINTER POLITICS

The Tevinter Imperium is governed by a magocracy. Powerful, noble mages form a legislative body known as the Magisterium. Its magisters spend almost as much time engaging in elaborate political schemes to prove their superiority over each other as they do making actual decisions for the good of the country.

Archon

The Archon is the supreme ruler of the Imperium. He has the authority to appoint new seats in the Magisterium and has final say over enacting any laws the Magisterium passes. Archons usually inherit their titles; they are the sons, nephews, brothers, cousins, or apprentices of previous Archons. The reigning Archon designates his heir to the Magisterium before he dies.

If an Archon dies without naming an heir, the Magisterium elects the new one. Previously, candidates came from the ranks of the Magisterium, but this practice has been banned since the Black Age. Candidates are now only eligible if they do not hold a seat in the Magisterium or rank in the Chantry.

Archons rule by divine right, a tradition that predates the Imperium. Their authority, like their magical power, is said to have been granted to them by a god. The specific divinities changed over time, from the Old Gods to the Maker, but the general belief in magic being bestowed by a higher power has remained a constant in Tevinter culture.

The Magisterium

The mage elites of Tevinter's Magisterium regularly gather to govern the Imperium. There are several routes into the Magisterium:

- A magister is chosen by each of the nation's seven Circles of Magi, usually from the ranks of the senior enchanters. First Enchanters are ineligible for this seat.

- Every grand cleric of the Imperial Chantry has a seat, as does the Imperial Divine.

- Seats can be inherited from magisters by their heirs.

- The Archon reserves the right to appoint new magisters of his choosing at any time.

Despite considerable elven victories, Orlais takes the elven capital of Halamshiral.

2:20 GLORY

The Dales fall. Elven settlements are uprooted.

2:20 GLORY

Divine Renata I orders the establishment of the first alienages. Many elves instead become nomads.

2:20 GLORY

TEVINTER SOCIAL CLASSES

Tevinter society is broken down into four distinct classes, two magical and two non-magical:

Mage Classes

Altus: The Altus mages are descendants of the original Dreamers, Tevinter magisters who were said to communicate with the Old Gods in the Fade. Though these gods are no longer venerated, ancient, magical bloodlines are still respected, and their ranks still form the upper crust of Tevinter nobility. The lion's share of magisters comes from Altus families.

For a time, the Altus were maligned for their apparent role in the creation of the First Blight. The act turned their most powerful and influential leaders into darkspawn, and many magisters were later slaughtered during the Transfiguration, when the Imperium converted to worship of Andraste's Maker. Over the ages, the Altus have restored their place at the peak of Tevinter society.

Laetans: The core of the Laetan class are mages born to families with no prior history of magic or to mage families who have practiced magic for generations, but cannot trace their ancestry to the Dreamers.

Many Laetans are known to vie viciously for power, having to prove themselves over the power-by-blood Altus class. A third of the Archons in the history of the Imperium have been Laetans.

Mundane Classes

Soporati: The Soporati are non-mage or "mundane" Tevinter citizens. Members of this overwhelmingly human class are allowed to own property and serve in the military. Many are merchants. Soporati do not have a direct say in matters of governance and cannot rise above the ranks of mother or father in the Imperial Chantry.

When a mage is born to a Soporati family, that family is given entry into the ranks of the Laetans and is given new prestige in Tevinter society. This is not to say the Soporati look up to the mage classes. Indeed, friction persists between the ruling class and their able-minded if ungifted brethren.

The Winter Palace, by far the most prominent structure in Halamshiral, becomes a regular seasonal retreat for the empress and selected Orlesian nobility.

2:30 GLORY

MINRATHOUS

The great city of Minrathous has the unique honor of having never been conquered, and for good reason. It was built on an island of rock not far from the shore, accessible only by a single bridge that can be destroyed if necessary. The island's ports and shipbuilding facilities are immense, as are the legendary catacombs that were carved beneath the island and capable of storing enough food to feed the city for a year.

The embassy in Minrathous, said to be constructed by Darinius himself as a guest home for the dwarven king Endrin Stonehammer, is still in use and is considered one of the wonders of the world. Another wonder is the city's massive arena, known as the Proving Grounds. The architectural marvel, built as a triangular prism, takes its concept from the dwarves. The exterior is decorated with hanging, terraced gardens, making it a green jewel at the center of a stone city.

The Minrathous Circle of Magi is the second-oldest building in the Imperium. In ancient times, it was the Temple of Razikale. This Circle is considered the best-preserved example of ancient architecture in the Imperium.

Despite the decline of the Imperium since the First Blight, Minrathous remains the largest city in Thedas.

A MISSING SLAVE

In Tevinter, a slave is invisible, even though the entire empire rests on our backs. Our hands built the walls of Minrathous and carry its wealth along the crumbling roads. Scribes like myself take dictation and write letters that shift the balance of power. My daughter, Leonora, a kitchen slave, works night and day so Magister Delphine isn't troubled by a torn robe or a cold supper.

Normally, I meet Leonora about the kitchens. But it has been days since our paths crossed. No one has seen her.

I can't help but think of the old stories that cross the slave markets like lightning, how, centuries ago, the ancients built their cities with blood magic, raising the very towers and walls with terrible rituals using our lives as fuel. Thousands of slaves were sacrificed as we were forced onto the altars of the Old Gods. Magister Delphine's perfect, marble-faced mansion likely stands on the back of a hundred voiceless elves.

But that was a different time. Andraste's words against blood magic made the practice all but forbidden and shunned. Though we may be punished, few slaves are dragged to the altar or milked of blood without at least some reprimand.

Yet Leonora is missing, and Magister Delphine seems different. She carries an aura she never had before. And rumors fly that a bitter rival has been publicly humiliated in a duel of magic. Through my grief I fear, I know, that my Leonora's life was the price.

I ache to speak as an equal with Magister Delphine, to demand answers. But such an audience would be a joke to her. No one sees a slave.

—Written in secret by slave scribe Solvarin Brann, 8:65 Blessed

Slaves: Slaves are not allowed to own property or serve in the military. Many of them are skilled workers who have been trained in a profession. However, they are not considered artisans, nor can they keep apprentices. Even when armed and serving as personal soldiers or bodyguards, slaves are not honored with military ranks. In the past, Tevinter slaves were overwhelmingly elven. Since the Long Walk, the class has become a mix of mostly elves and humans.

Slaves can only legally be set free before a judge, with the owner present to formally state the slaves have been granted freedom, or by the owner's will upon his or her death. Freed slaves are still not considered citizens. They are instead known as the Liberati, a subclass with limited rights. Liberati can join a Circle of Magi or serve as an apprentice in a trade. Liberati may also own property, but they cannot join the military and rarely have a say in governance.

After Andraste's slave uprisings, the Imperium freed thousands of slaves. However, Tevinter was buying new slaves within a few decades.

Antivan cities unite under a common banner to defend themselves against Fyruss's advance.

A MAGISTER'S NEEDS

Dearest sister:

It's been an age since I've written, but I simply had to thank you! Your advice was perfect. Just a few gossips bought with gold and everyone in Minrathous thought Quirinus and I were the most dreadful rivals. It let us indulge our little love affair without his wretched family interfering, if only for a little while.

Quirinus himself sadly turned out to be less ideal. I caught him carrying on behind my back, with a Soporati of all things. Can you imagine? There was nothing for it. During the quarrel, I threw boiling water in his face. Let his Soporati kiss the scars better.

He's cowering in his mansion now, pretending he was hurt in a duel. No doubt he'll want revenge. Don't worry, dear sister. I took precautions. Don't tell anyone, but my master taught me a few secrets that should keep me safe. The ritual cost me the mansion's kitchen slave. Lenna, I think she was called? But I've enough power now to keep Quirinus from trying anything foolish. Kitchen slaves can be bought by the dozen at the market, so there's no harm in it.

I feel wonderful, dear sister. Won't you come for Wintersend this year? I'll have my new slave trained to make your favorite lemon cakes by then. It'll be perfect.

—Letter from Magister Delphine to her sister Aulia, 8:65 Blessed

DWARVES & THE IMPERIUM

The dwarven kingdoms have enjoyed a close relationship with the Imperium for more than two thousand years. Their bond is evident in the Imperium's Proving Grounds and the massive stone golems, known as Juggernauts, that guard the gates of Minrathous.

A large number of surface dwarves live in the Imperium. They are not considered citizens but, instead, foreign dignitaries, even if their houses have lived in Tevinter for generations. Since the time of the Archon Darinius, Orzammar has had a sizable embassy in Minrathous. The dwarves now have embassies in every major Tevinter city, much like the dwarven enclaves found in other Thedosian nations. The difference between the dwarves of Tevinter and the dwarves of every other surface nation is that those in Tevinter have their own branch of government.

The Ambassadoria is the dwarven body of representatives elected by the dwarves to advise the Archon and the Magisterium. The Ambassadoria functions less like a parliament and more like a lobby group.

Lyrium is the primary reason Tevinter and the dwarves enjoy such a close political relationship. The magic-centric Imperium is dependent on a steady supply of lyrium from Orzammar. Without it, much of the Imperium would literally collapse. Magic is so prevalent in Tevinter life that entire buildings are raised and often maintained by magic.

The dwarven embassies, in Minrathous, Neromenian, and Qarinus, are completely subterranean. Because these embassies are still technically within the Stone, dwarves who serve there retain their castes—even if their families have spent generations outside of a thaig. Some of the dwarves in Tevinter live their entire lives within the confines of their embassy, never stepping under the open sky.

Despite the conversion of many in Tevinter to belief in the Maker, images of dragons still factor heavily in Tevinter art and architecture.

Fyruss is betrayed by his Tevinter allies. The Imperium annexes Starkhaven.

2:45 GLORY

Caspar Pentaghast of Hunter Fell seizes control of the city-state Nevarra.

2:46 GLORY

RIVAIN

Rivain is a human nation unlike any other in Thedas, where the culture of the Qun butts up against tribal beliefs and the Chantry competes for influence. The country is bordered almost entirely by water, save for a land bridge to the northwest connecting it to Antiva. The two nations share the picturesque Rialto Bay, but little else.

Rivain is home to the only peaceful Qunari settlement on the main continent, in Kont-aar. The influence of the Qun, if not absolute adherence to its teachings, is present throughout Rivain, getting stronger as one heads north toward Kont-aar.

"The Chant of Light never truly reached the ears of these people," Chantry scholar Ferdinand Genitivi once wrote of Rivain. "Resistance to the Chant goes deeper than the Qunari Wars. The Rivaini refuse to be parted from their seers, wise women who are in fact hedge mages, communicating with spirits and actually allowing themselves to become possessed. The Chantry prohibition against such magical practices violates millennia of local tradition."

KEY FACTS

Official Name: Kingdom of Rivain

Demonym: Rivaini

Government: Monarchy

Capital: Dairsmuid

Religion: Pantheism, Qunari, Chantry

The infamous raider Isabela has Rivaini roots, exemplified by her extensive body piercings.

RIVAINI TRADITION IN A CHANTRY ERA

The Rivaini people trace their roots to pantheist ancestors, and many in Rivain still believe that their god and the universe are one in the same.

Traditionally, the Rivaini are a matriarchal society, and much of the nation still subscribes to the belief that women are best suited to rule. All decisions involving the welfare of most Rivaini communities rest solely with the eldest women. The most senior of these women are called seers, who freely practice magic.

The nation's relative acceptance of magic, at least in the areas occupied by more traditional Rivaini, has led to an

The Chantry reclaims Starkhaven from Tevinter in another Exalted March, the second in less than an age.

2:80 GLORY

Most of Rivain is bordered by water. Seafaring, for reasons legitimate and otherwise, is a common trade.

NOTORIOUS RAIDER TRASH

You want to know about my raider "friends," huh? What in the world would make a goody-goody like you poke your nose in such a dirty business?

Well, there's good "Ser" Tadeus, of course. Some people say he runs the Armada. He doesn't. No one does. The Armada is a collection of ships, and each one is like a nation unto itself—its own rules, its own people, its own leader. Tadeus is respected, of course. You don't sink a half dozen Orlesian frigates without earning at least some respect. He's a dangerous man, but he's no king of the Armada. Anyone tells you that, they're lying, or misinformed.

Then there's Lachlan Poole. Likes to sail around the southern cape of Rivain, rattling his saber and posturing like it means something. No one really cares what Lachlan Poole does, though only a fool will say that to his face. You see, the thing about Lachlan Poole is he's got gold. Lots of it. All earned through legitimate means, even. He still has a trading company somewhere in the Marches, and hires people to run it while he plays adventurer on the high seas. The Armada lets him do it because it always pays to have friends with coin.

The one you should really watch out for is Ianto. They call him the "Talon," the "Terror of Llomerryn," but most often, "That Crooked Bastard What Might Kill You in Your Sleep." Slavery, murder, torture . . . nothing is too much for Ianto. He'd traffic in souls, if he discovered a way to extract them from people. In fact, I'm sure he has some Tevinter cronies working on that right this second. I'm sure there's a coin to be made in stolen souls somewhere. The Imperium, probably.

—Isabela, self-proclaimed "Queen of the Eastern Seas"

Divine Galatea grants the Right of Annulment to all grand clerics of the Chantry, allowing them to purge Circles of Magi ruled irredeemable.

2:83 GLORY

The Grand Cathedral in Val Royeaux is completed, its two towers visible from miles around. The Towers Age is named.

2:99 GLORY

odd relationship with the Chantry and Circle of Magi. The Circles of Rivain function much like those elsewhere and are supported by the Andrastian nobility. However, they tolerate and work with the seers, allowing the wise women to keep apprentices and remain free so long as they aid the nation's templars when required.

Nowhere in Rivain is the Chantry influence stronger than in Dairsmuid, the capital. Rivaini royalty are Chantry faithful, but also progressive in their beliefs, if only out of necessity. The nation, with its patchwork of cultures, remains one entity through consensus and compromise.

While the people of Rivain do have a currency-based economy, they tend to not attach any particular value to amassing wealth, instead emphasizing the welfare of the whole. Communities support each other; if one is having a bad year, the others will send supplies and labor to ensure its people do not suffer.

Because of its location and the lack of Chantry authority beyond Dairsmuid, Rivain is a favored home of raiders and those who wish to skirt Chantry laws common in other human nations.

LLOMERRYN

Llomerryn is a politically neutral port city on an island off the coast of Rivain. It is best known for the Llomerryn Accords signed there to end the Exalted Marches and the Qunari Wars that wracked Thedas for almost 150 years.

The island has since become a haven for pirates, brigands, and all manner of criminals. The famed markets and bazaars of Llomerryn overflow with treasures—often pillaged—from far-off lands.

The Raiders of the Waking Sea, also known as the Felicisima Armada, operate out of Llomerryn.

SEERS & THE ALLSMET

23rd of Ferventis
When I set out for the capital of Rivain, I did not anticipate arriving in the middle of a provincial little festival. The streets are thick with fishermen and farmers coming in from the countryside for some gathering. Rural life apparently breeds fierce rivalries. I've seen more than one fistfight erupt in the square outside the inn. And do they call this music? Excellent wine, however. It must be Antivan.

24th of Ferventis
The agreement is sealed. The merchant had more jewelry on his head than Orlesian women do on their fingers, but anyone willing to sell me silk at this price may dress how they please. Sabol, whose title is "Ana-Een," is an amiable sort who offered to show me "Allsmet" tonight.

Apparently the village leaders—hedge mages they dub "seers"—travel to Dairsmuid twice a year to meet in council, forge trade agreements, and publicly pledge loyalty to Rivain's queen. Deals made at Allsmet are seen as especially auspicious. Sabol warned me that sometimes hotheads will attempt to settle old feuds before these seers decree binding judgments here. But there are also feasts, lavish gift-giving ceremonies, musical contests, and other rustic nonsense.

This explains the rabble. Still, it might be amusing to sample the local color. I've just witnessed a loudly public exchange between two men trying to outdo each other with ridiculous boasts in the square. The most extravagant liar was applauded and decorated with wreaths by the crowd! The Rivaini are lively. I'll grant them that. And not at all afraid to drink with a Tevinter.

Hah! Peasant oaf threatened me after I tripped into him at feast. Bit of fire cowed him! Impressed ladies too. What enlightened attitudes. These people have fantasasssas lovely dancers here. Must remb get vintage from inkeeep. Label was BLUE!

26th of Ferventis
Find out who's sleeping on top of me. Bring more robes next year.

—From the diary of Beskorus of Vyrantium, 9:32 Dragon

Some Thedosians romanticize life as a raider, while others write the pirates off as scoundrels.

Archon Vespasian is assassinated the same day Val Royeaux announces the completion of the Grand Cathedral.

Flemeth is said to be born in the Fereldan village of Highever.

2:99 GLORY | TOWERS AGE | 3:00 TOWERS

PAR VOLLEN

When the Qunari arrived in Thedas from the north, Par Vollen was the first land they conquered and converted to the Qun. Through ages of war, Par Vollen has remained a steady pillar of Qunari society, held firm by the Qunari even when their attempts to conquer the rest of Thedas fell apart under heavy resistance.

Par Vollen is peaceful, its native humans largely willing converts to the Qun. The Qunari consider Par Vollen their new homeland.

LIFE IN PAR VOLLEN

Long before the arrival of the Qunari, the human inhabitants of Par Vollen built great pyramids in the island's abundant jungles. Their culture developed in isolation from mainland peoples. However, that old culture has largely been forgotten after generations under the rigid law and teachings of the Qun. While the pyramids of the original society were impressive, the marvels have since been outdone by the great domes and aqueducts of Qunandar, which

DEMOGRAPHICS

Official Name: Par Vollen
Demonym: Vollen
Government: Qunari
Capital: Qunandar
Religion: Qunari

The Old God Toth awakens, spurring the Third Blight.

3:10 TOWERS

Darkspawn swarm the Tevinter cities of Marnas Pell and Vyrantium, as well as the Orlesian cities of Arlesans and Montsimmard. The Grey Wardens quickly organize a defense, and despite heavy losses, the darkspawn are pushed back.

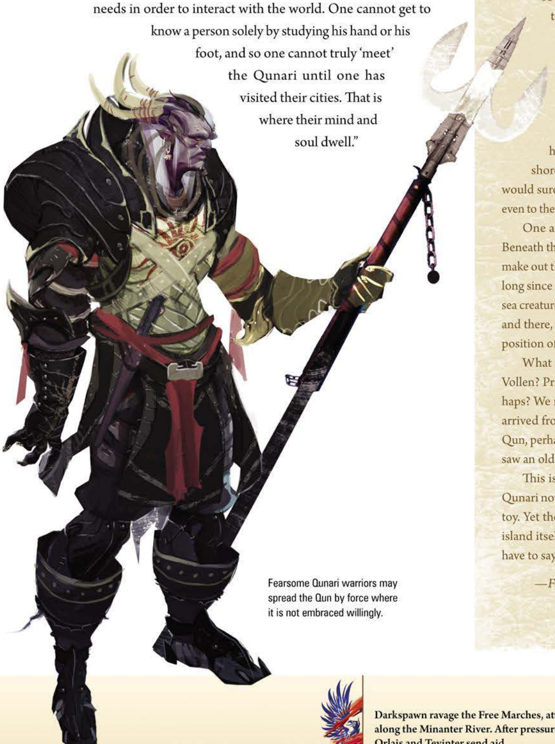
3:10 TOWERS

is the only city of real importance on the island and easily a rival to the great Thedosian cities like Cumberland in Nevarra, Val Royeaux in Orlais, and Minrathous in Tevinter.

The few outsiders who have seen Qunandar say the city is one of the wonders of the world.

The Seer of Kont-aar once wrote that Par Vollen is one of the only places where it is possible to understand Qunari society in its entirety.

"The Qunari view their whole society as a single creature: a living entity whose health and well-being is the responsibility of all," she wrote. "Each individual is only a tiny part of the whole, a drop of blood in its veins. Important not for itself, but for what it is to the whole creature. Because of this, the Qunari most outsiders meet belong to the army, which the Qun regards as if it were the physical body: arms, legs, eyes and ears, the things a creature needs in order to interact with the world. One cannot get to know a person solely by studying his hand or his foot, and so one cannot truly 'meet' the Qunari until one has visited their cities. That is where their mind and soul dwell."



Fearsome Qunari warriors may spread the Qun by force where it is not embraced willingly.

THE PYRAMIDS OF PAR VOLLEN

The island called Par Vollen was the first land in Thedas to be taken by the Qunari, and has been held by them ever since. But while the Qunari have raised their own marvels on the island—the famed city of Qunandar comes to mind—Par Vollen had a rich history before the Qun ever came to its shores. Tear your eyes from Qunandar's wonders and look instead to the jungle. There you'll see the ruins of vast cities that proclaim in silence: "We were here."

Par Vollen's distinctive pyramids, looming from the overgrowth, have remained largely intact, even if their intended purpose has been lost. They do not seem to be tombs, though some chambers contain bodies that have been carefully preserved. Amazingly, the pyramids' proportions are mathematically perfect. Since their alignment is so precise, one suspects they served some scientific purpose. Observatories, perhaps? Andvan Therastes has observed that the shape of the Par Vollen pyramids seems to perfectly match the constellation Solium.

We know more of the pyramids than we do of the humans who built them. The Qunari came to Par Vollen as conquerors, but there is no history and little sign of battles fought on the island's shores. A civilization that could build such vast cities would surely have defenses, armies, perhaps weapons alien even to the Qunari. So why is there so little proof of resistance?

One answer may lie in what remains of their temples. Beneath the leaves and vines covering the walls, you can still make out the stylized carvings that adorn them. The paint has long since flaked away, but the silhouettes are clear: intricate sea creatures, shipwrights, musicians, archers, and kings. Here and there, odd figures are depicted, tall, horned, always in a position of authority and respect.

What were these horned figures to the ancients of Par Vollen? Priests, ritualistically crowned? Heroes? Gods, perhaps? We may never know the truth. But when the Qunari arrived from the sea, horned and carrying the word of the Qun, perhaps instead of conquerors, the people of Par Vollen saw an old legend returning to them.

This is all supposition. The humans of Par Vollen are Qunari now, their ancient civilization discarded like a child's toy. Yet the pyramids remain, along with the old cities, the island itself. One day, greater scholars may hear what they have to say.

—*From* A Compiled History of the Occupied North, *by Renatus of Ayesleigh*

Darkspawn ravage the Free Marches, attacking all cities along the Minanter River. After pressure from the Wardens, Orlais and Tevinter send aid.

SEHERON

Seheron, the largest island in Thedas, was a paradise claimed by Tevinter long before the Qunari first landed on its shores. Upon their arrival, the Qunari handily ousted the Tevinters and took the island as their own. Life in Seheron has been colored by near-constant conflict ever since.

KEY FACTS

Official Name: Seheron

Demonym: Seheron

Government: Qunari

Capital: Seheron

Religion: Qunari, Imperial Chantry (minority)

Tevinter considers Seheron a disputed zone and continues to mount offensives to retake the island. Though it is technically Qunari territory, some native Seherons actively rebel against the Qun's authority. Complicating matters are significant pockets of Fog Warriors and Tal-Vashoth in the northern portion of the island, who consider both the Qunari and the Imperium enemies.

SEHERON CHANGES HANDS

Seheron was home to an old and impressive Tevinter-ruled culture with architecture dating back to the glory days of the ancient Imperium. In 6:32 Steel, after taking Par Vollen, the Qunari landed in Seheron. After ten years, they had not only occupied the entire island, but a sizable portion of the mainland Imperium.

The Qunari were pushed back and entrenched in Seheron. The subsequent Battle of the Nocen Sea was the largest naval engagement in recorded history. It resulted in a stalemate with the destruction of many ships on both sides.

Two years later, the New Exalted Marches were declared by both Tevinter's Imperial Chantry—to retake Seheron and the eastern city of Qarinus—and the Chantry—to retake Rivain. In all, three major Exalted Marches took place. By the end, there was no clear victor, and war persisted until 7:84 Storm, when the Qunari relinquished Seheron to the Imperium.

The people of Seheron spent generations rebuilding after the devastation wrought by so much war. Then, in 8:55 Blessed, the Qunari mounted yet another offensive to retake the island. The new war between the Qunari and the Tevinter Imperium lasted three years, and ended with the island falling back under Qunari control.

Old Tevinter buildings still stand in Seheron, shadows of Imperial reign.

The armies of Orlais and Tevinter meet in Hunter Fell and join the Grey Wardens for the last battle of the Third Blight. Toth is destroyed.

3:25 TOWERS

Marcher states, still celebrating their rescue, are taken by surprise as the victorious armies of Orlais and Tevinter turn on them. Orlais takes the city-state of Nevarra, while Tevinter claims Hunter Fell.

3:25 TOWERS

Many battles were waged in the waters surrounding Seheron as the Qunari and the Tevinter fought for control of the island.

BATTLEGROUND STATE

It seems a bitter twist of fate to discover that half of Thedas does not consider my homeland a nation at all. Qunari maps depict the island as part of their territory, without any ambiguousness to the claim. I can only assume this is because all islands within the Boeric Ocean naturally fall under their jurisdiction. The Tevinter maps, meanwhile, still proudly show the entire island as part of the Imperium, even though Imperial control outside of small pockets is little more than fiction and changes whenever the Qunari return their attention to the area.

Imperial reports speak of "fog warriors" as if we are beasts, little better than darkspawn or dragons. "Dangerous element of the wilderness, best avoided or eliminated, but ultimately of no consequence." It angers me to read these things.

Ours is a land that has been shaped by war, as no other. Long ago the Imperium came, and after centuries of trying and failing to turn us into compliant Imperial citizens, the Qunari came instead. They conquered Seheron and attempted to convert us. Neither side succeeded in taking our freedom. And though battle after bloody battle have ground our ancient halls of wisdom practically to dust, we still dream of the land that was.

The fog dancers who travel with each band of warriors regale them with the legends of old and keep the songs of our people alive. They say that the griffons of the Grey Wardens came from Seheron. They tell us of the ancient Curse of Nahar that brought the fog, and the promise that will one day lift it. They speak of the March of Four Winds, of the lost people who fled to the northern islands and the great heroes who learned at the feet of elves.

Are the old tales true? We may never know. All that remains of the land Seheron once was is gone. But I know we will make them true someday.

—From "A Land of Fog," by Brother Ashor Vell

Hunter Fell breaks away from Tevinter.

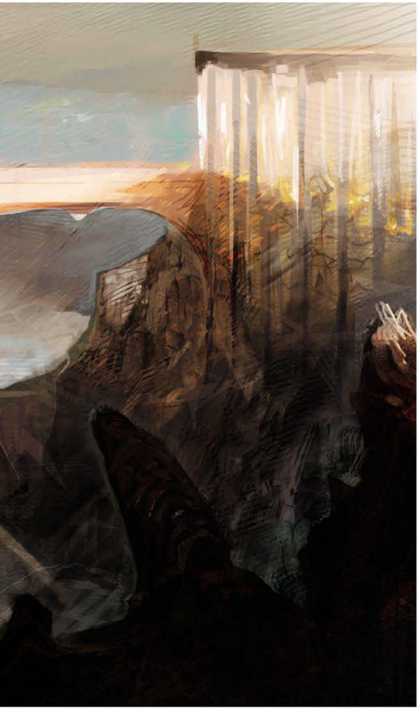
3:49 TOWERS

Nevarra successfully fights for independence from Orlais.

3:65 TOWERS

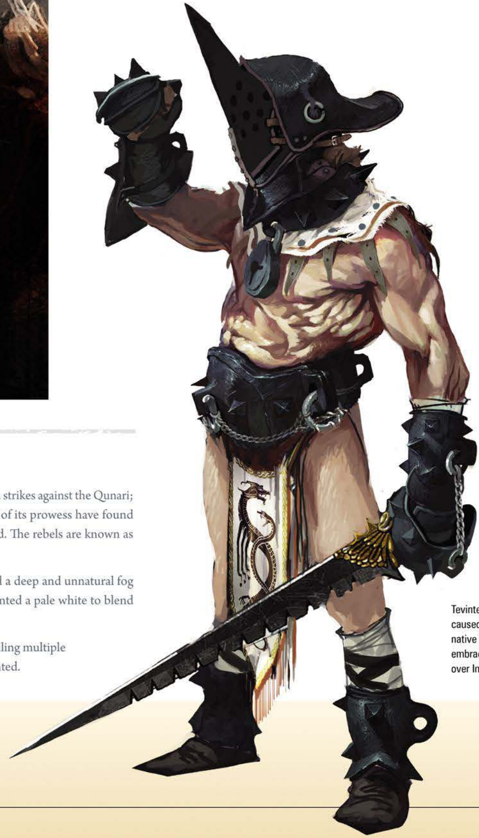
Divine Joyous II is made head of the Chantry.

3:86 TOWERS



This war leveled much of Seheron's new infrastructure. As its people rebuilt, now in a manner befitting the Qun, large sections of the island remained outside of Qunari authority. Most Seherons not under Qunari domination grew to hate the Imperium as much as the Qunari, fed up as they were with the war brought by both sides and the terrible toll it took on the island.

Though the Qunari now struggle to convert and hold the rest of the island, many island inhabitants were all too happy to adopt the Qun over the oppression offered by the Imperium. Almost all of the large population of former elven slaves who live on Seheron now hold high roles within the Qunari occupying forces, helping the Qunari put down remaining resistance.



Tevinter slavery caused many native Seherons to embrace the Qun over Imperial rule.

FOG WARRIORS

The native Seheron rebel forces have resorted to deadly stealth strikes against the Qunari; one group in particular has proven so effective that stories of its prowess have found their way off the island—though these are likely exaggerated. The rebels are known as Fog Warriors.

According to the tales, the Fog Warriors arrive silently amid a deep and unnatural fog that is assumed to be magical. Their armor and skin are painted a pale white to blend into their surroundings.

Stalking silently, the Fog Warriors strike their foes swiftly, killing multiple enemies before they are even aware an attack has been mounted.

The Chantry discovers Tevinter clergy are preaching that magic must rule over man, and not the other way around. Divine Joyous II demands the Tevinter Chant be revised to conform to the Orlesian Chant.

chapter four

MAGIC

Tevinter refuses to conform to the Chantry's edict, and Joyous II declares the entire Tevinter clergy heretics. Tevinter forms its own, pro-magic Imperial Chantry in Minrathous. This rift is known as the Schism.

3:87 TOWERS

The Imperial Chantry elects its own Divine, a male magister named Valhail I.

3:87 TOWERS

A N ORLESIAN GIRL DISCOVERS LIGHTNING IN HER FINGERS when she touches a lake and kills all the fish. In the woods down the road, an elderly elf hides from templars. His only company: the undead he calls to rise by cutting his arms. Far north, a Qunari with the power to make fire from air is chained, masked, and led around like a dog on a leash.

These are mages. The terrible gift they wield is magic. And depending on their home, they may be feared, oppressed, or even celebrated.

Magic courses through all living beings in Thedas. Some even believe it is the power that gives all beings life. Yet despite magic's ubiquity, only a rare few possess the ability to manipulate it.

Mages aren't born with the ability to use magic. The talent usually surfaces around puberty, and never reveals itself in quite the same way. Signs may be as subtle as spontaneously changing eye color or as extreme as accidentally starting a fire. Regardless, when a magical talent first presents itself, it is a confusing time for a mage. Some keep their power hidden. Others use it to act out, sometimes with mortal consequences. Outside of the Tevinter Imperium, unsanctioned magic use is often cause for alarm. It is not unusual for the discovery of a new mage to be met with fear or even violence, and stories of a young "witch" killed because of recent crop failure prove far too common.

A mage may specialize in one or several kinds of magic. Some wield the elements. Others may tap into the Fade, dominate minds, and manipulate spirits. A skilled minority are healers, able to seal wounds and shield allies from harm. The rebellious or evil few dabble in the dark art known as blood magic.

Regardless of how magic is used, it is an undeniably powerful force in Thedas that touches nearly every aspect of life.

The death of Divine Joyous II in Val Royeaux is celebrated in Minrathous, declared a holiday by the Imperial Divine.

The Black Age is named as the Chantry calls for retribution against the false Divine of the north.

The Black Emporium of Xenon the Antiquarian.

PROPERTIES OF MAGIC

MANA

A mage draws upon a personal reservoir of mana to cast all spells. As breath is to breathing, mana is to magic. When a mage's mana is depleted, the mage must rest to recover it, much as a laborer must rest after physical exertion. Overexertion may well lead to death for the untrained or overly ambitious.

"It is potential that dwells within a person but does not always manifest itself," influential Circle enchanter Wenselus once said of mana. "All men are connected to the Fade; we go there to dream. But only those with this potential may draw upon its power. Mana is, then, a measurement of one's ability to draw power from the Fade, and it is this power that is expended in magic."

Outside sources may bolster mana. Various potions and artifacts, as well as learned techniques, can speed up the process of mana recovery. The mineral lyrium is an especially potent mana booster, able to strengthen a mage's power beyond what anyone might naturally muster.

Werewolves, long present in Fereldan lore, are said to reappear, assuming the appearance of regular people. The use of dogs as guards able to "detect" werewolves becomes common. An especially bloody chapter of Fereldan history ends with the apparent extinction of the creatures.

Lyrium is mined by the dwarves for use by mages and templars.

LYRIUM

Only one nonliving thing is known to contain the essence of magic: the priceless, blue-green crystal known as lyrium. This rare mineral is found beneath the ground and is highly sought after for its magical properties. But it is also notoriously dangerous. If living beings are exposed to lyrium in its raw form, it will slowly drive them mad. It can also cause physical calamities, such as deafness, memory loss, and nausea.

The more magically sensitive a being is, the more acute and dangerous their exposure to lyrium. Most mages would not dare come close to raw lyrium, for there is a risk of death from internal hemorrhaging before madness even has a chance to take hold.

Dwarves, who are largely inured to magic, are able to mine lyrium safely, although doing so requires caution. Once refined—that is, dissolved in a liquid or heated until it crumbles into a fine powder—lyrium is safe for all to use.

Regardless of its state, lyrium is addictive. The more one uses lyrium, the more one wants to use it, and always in greater quantities.

In its raw form, lyrium emits a strangely soothing sound that some call the voice of the Maker. The Chantry claims the mineral is a remnant from the birth of the world, when the Maker created the land and skies. They believe lyrium is not so much the essence of magic as the essence of all creation.

Lyrium's appearance in the Fade suggests it somehow bridges the gap between the dreamer's world and the waking world of Thedas.

USES OF LYRIUM

Supplying Mana for Magic: When used properly, the mana within lyrium can replenish a mage's power more quickly than through natural means. Lyrium can also aid in powerful spells and rituals. It is the only known way a typical mage can achieve power otherwise reserved for blood magic or dangerous pacts with demons.

Entering the Fade: Lyrium is an integral part of a ritual that allows mages to separate spirit from body and enter the Fade voluntarily. This has traditionally been used to contact those asleep and far away, or as part of a quest to seek self-enlightenment.

Item Enchantment: Dwarves have long used lyrium to create enchanted items, most often weapons and armor. Without lyrium, enchantments placed on items are inevitably temporary. The Formari mages within the Circle of Magi also craft enchanted items using lyrium, though their methods differ. Dwarves enchant items to make them sharper and more durable. The Formari enchant items to hold magical power like fire or ice.

Light: Trace amounts of lyrium can be infused in stones to create glowstones, which are used to light passages. This practice is most common in Orlais.

Magical Immunity: The templar mage hunters of the Chantry engage in a ritual involving lyrium that grants them the ability to dispel and resist magic.

Rivaini-born Queen of Antiva Asha Subira Bahadur Campana is born. The "Queen Mother of Thedas," her blood is said to run through Orlesian, Nevarran, Starkhavener, and Ander royalty. Even some Tevinter magisters claim her as an ancestor.

4:30 BLACK

The Chantry calls four Exalted Marches in an attempt to convert the Imperium. Each time, the march falls just short of conquering Minrathous. In the end, they serve only to cement the separation between Minrathous and Val Royeaux.

4:40 BLACK

Red lyrium is potent and especially rare.

CONFESSIONS OF A LYRIUM ADDICT

A prison cell, a scrap of paper for my confession, scarce enough bread and water. All I get for skimming one lousy bottle from the lyrium stores. Knight-Lieutenant Freyan cut my normal ration for "insubordination." Insubordination, my arse. It's because I saw him desert the guard tower to meet his girl. Freyan thought he'd teach me a lesson.

I'm thirsty but the water doesn't work. It should be more . . . blue.

You take it like medicine at first, the lyrium. Your whole body sings with it, like the Maker's own fire. You're not scared of anything, not even abominations. After, it even takes away the nightmares.

But the ration's too small. If they don't give you enough, your hands get cold. The sky starts to press down on you. Little things slip away. So you have to stay.

The senior templars all have that look, that cloudy look in their eyes.

"Sign your confession," they said. I'm trying. I can't think of what name to sign.

—Confession of unknown templar found among Montsimmard Chantry records in 8:72 Blessed

RED LYRIUM

A more potent form of lyrium, red in color, was recently discovered in the Deep Roads. Its strength is such that possessors may be imbued with magic-like power, regardless of whether or not they are a mage. Contact comes at a cost, however, as the greater power presents greater dangers. Red lyrium's potency is such that it corrupts all minds eventually, even normally resistant dwarves.

Red lyrium was first found during an expedition into a long-uninhabited thaig in 9:31 Dragon. The infamous Champion of Kirkwall, known as Hawke, led the expedition into the Deep Roads near Kirkwall, and discovered giant veins of the mineral pushing through cavern walls from some unknown source. An idol carved from the red lyrium was brought to the surface.

The discovery played an important role in the templar-mage crisis in Kirkwall six years later. Templar Knight-Commander Meredith Stannard, already hostile towards mage activity in the city-state, used red lyrium to gain the strength to take on a mage rebellion following a rogue mage's destruction of the local chantry. It appeared as though the power of the lyrium corrupted Stannard's mind. She was killed in an ensuing battle with Hawke.

Divine Clemence I commissions Tevinter fugitive Adralla of Vyrantium to write the Litany of Adralla, a tool to protect against blood mages and demonic possession.

4:46 BLACK

The Orlesian Empire takes advantage of Ferelden's fractured state and crosses the Frostback Mountains to invade for the first time.

4:80 BLACK

Knight-Commander Meredith Stannard was overwhelmed by the effects of red lyrium.

The dwarves, accustomed to documenting the smallest details for the sake of keeping history, had no prior record of red lyrium's existence. Many aspects of it, including how it grows and where it gets its color, remain a mystery

MAGIC IN THE CHANTRY

With the rise of the Chantry in Thedas, mages became targets of public persecution and fear. The religion's harsh distrust of magic use forced mages to hide their talents. Those who wished to practice magic openly retreated into isolation, often in organized settlements. Those who did not risked death.

Despite the Chantry's rigid stance on magic, it does not forbid its practice completely. The commandment of the Maker states that magic should serve man rather than rule him. Emperor Kordillus Drakon, who founded the modern Chantry in Andraste's name, realized that magic had potential as a tool for public benefit. During the famed emperor's reign in the Divine Age, the first Chantry-sanctioned mages were ordained and placed under the close supervision of the organization.

Although mages were permitted to serve the ruling classes under Drakon, two important limitations were imposed:

1. Blood magic was strictly forbidden.
2. Mages could not unduly influence rulers or become rulers themselves.

Because mages were prohibited from influencing those in power, they were required to be politically neutral. Most mages restricted their use of magic to healing and other peaceful applications. However, the Chantry still feared that playing with magic risked mages becoming abominations. To monitor proper magic use, they created the Templar Order. Templars were placed in chantries where mages served. From the beginning, the relationship between templars and sanctioned mages was strained at best.

THE LIMITS OF MAGIC

Magic is not all powerful. There are limits not even the greatest mages have overcome.

Age: The ability to use magic usually surfaces in adolescence. Children may grow up to become mages, but their abilities will not usually manifest until they reach puberty.

Physically Entering the Fade: When a mind enters the Fade, the body remains behind. Physical objects cannot enter or exit the Fade. Only once has this barrier been broken—in ancient Tevinter. The spell the magisters used to enter the Fade physically required two-thirds of the lyrium in the Imperium, as well as the blood of several hundred slaves.

Mundane Tasks: Most mages are taught to use magic only when necessary. Just as one would not use a greatsword to chop vegetables, magic is not typically used to pick apples or tidy houses.

All-Powerful Artifacts: Like mages, enchanted items are unable to break the rules of common magic. Enchanted items cannot resurrect the dead or physically enter the Fade. Powerful enchanted items and artifacts are rare and difficult to produce.

Restoring Life: Life is finite. A truly great healer may bring someone back from the very precipice of death, but cannot use magic to bring a dead person back to life. The only known way to keep alive someone who should be dead is through spirit possession, an occurrence that is both exceptionally rare and dangerous.

Traveling Great Distances: Mages cannot teleport or travel great physical distances using magic.

The Fereldan teyrns set aside age-old differences to push the Orlesians back in a united front.

4:83 BLACK

The Orlesian Empire hopes to take the port of Highever, but the fortress at Redcliffe holds out too long, and winter in the Frostbacks leaves many Orlesian units without supplies. By the spring, most pull out or are captured.

4:83 BLACK

In 1:5 Divine, the Second Blight struck. Emperor Drakon sought the aid of mages in the battle with the darkspawn, permitting them to release their full power without restraint in the name of humanity's survival. The mages proved essential and won enough respect to negotiate greater independence.

The first Circle of Magi was created during the Second Blight, with the signing of the controversial Nevarran Accord by the Chantry and the newly aligned Seekers of Truth. The Circle served to keep close tabs on those with magical abilities while mentoring their use of magic for occasions when it would be required, like injury or war. Circle towers cropped up in communities across Thedas. They became a refuge for those willing to bend to the Chantry-imposed conventions, and prisons for those who would not.

Ghast shamans, known as velghastrials, unearth corpse totems to do their bidding.

The famed Chateau Haine is built in the western Vimmark Mountains by Lord Norbert de la Haine, who uses it to stage numerous failed invasions of Marcher states.

Some say the Witch of the Wilds known as Flemeth is several hundred years old.

Divine Justinia II names the next age Exalted as the war with Tevinter persists.

4:99 BLACK

EXALTED AGE

The last Exalted March on the Imperium ends in retreat for Orlais.

5:10 EXALTED

THE CIRCLE OF MAGI

Circle Towers are necessarily large, as they house not only mages, but templars, servants, and often prisoners.

No single organization in Thedas has had more influence over mage culture than the Circle. Since its inception, the order of trained mages has regulated the use of magic in Chantry nations across Thedas. Many important traditions have come out of the Circle, and its practices have heavily influenced how magic is used and perceived.

Local branches have long acted as both schools and storehouses of magical knowledge. Although the Circle is supposed to be autonomous, a heavy templar presence in all Circle towers has effectively made the organization an arm of the Chantry for ages.

The Grey Wardens sign treaties with the various teyrns of Ferelden and enter the land in a permanent fashion, building a fortress in Denerim as well as several small outposts to watch for signs of darkspawn.

5:10 EXALTED

The Fourth Blight begins with the awakening of the Old God Andoral.

5:12 EXALTED

Chantry law requires those with significant magical ability to join the nearest Circle and live under its supervision. While Thedosians with extremely low levels of magical talent are generally permitted to go about their lives, they are still closely watched. In most nations, practicing magic and not joining a Circle is to be branded an apostate and, thus, a danger to society. Those who

survive capture are turned over to the Circle to become students or prisoners, depending on the circumstances.

Over the years, numerous Circles have been built across Thedas. Though usually in remote places, Circle chapters can also be found in major cities. Most are huge structures, usually towers, dominating city skylines and country horizons. Inside, there is ample room to house, feed, and train hundreds of people. Every Circle also has significant dungeon space.

The future of the Circle of Magi, and indeed, all mages in Thedas, is uncertain. The Circle, templars, and Chantry are all at odds after a series of bloody mage-templar conflicts that led to many templars and Seekers severing ties with the Chantry in 9:40 Dragon. Loyalties are also split within mage leadership, as some support the Circle system while others support mage independence.

Darkspawn pour into the Free Marches, Rivain, and the Anderfels. The Ander capital of Hossberg comes under siege. Tevinter and Orlais are not hit as hard as the rest of Thedas. Tevinter refuses to send any aid, while Orlais commits only a token force.

Divine Rosamund is appointed. At nineteen, she is the youngest Divine in history.

5:12 EXALTED

5:16 EXALTED

The Lake Calenhad Circle Tower in Ferelden is only accessible by boat.

The Harrowing

A mage who has survived Circle training has not done so easily. Years of instruction culminate in a difficult test known as "the Harrowing." Those who fail face death, and mages who do not wish to undergo the trial are made Tranquil.

The actual test, kept secret from apprentices, begins with the novice mage sitting in a room surrounded by numerous senior spellcasters and templars. The apprentice uses lyrium to project their mind into the Fade. There, the apprentice must face a demonic spirit and the threat of possession. If the mage resists the spirit, the test is passed. Those who fail become abominations, and are killed on the spot by templars supervising the ritual.

The Harrowing separates skilled magic users from those too weak or unstable to be trusted with their gift. The Chantry considers mages who have passed the Harrowing no longer a danger to society—until they prove otherwise—and gives them a limited license to practice magic.

Any living, full-fledged mage who has spent time in the Circle has undergone this test.

PHYLACTERIES

Every Circle apprentice provides a sample of blood to be kept in a phylactery, a special vial imbued with magic. The phylactery can be used to track down or even remotely cast a spell on a fugitive mage. The holder of a mage's phylactery essentially controls that mage.

The Grey Warden Garahel leads an army of Wardens and Anders to break the siege at Hossberg.

5:20 EXALTED

Darkspawn all but devastate the Free Marches. Chateau Haine becomes Fortress Haine, a makeshift Warden garrison. A refuge known as the Retreat is dug into the mountain. At the most dire point of the Fourth Blight, hundreds of fleeing Kirkwall and Cumberland residents call the Retreat home.

5:21 EXALTED

The Tranquil

The "Rite of Tranquility" completely severs a mage's connection to the Fade in an attempt to permanently block the potential for spirit possession.

You can tell a Tranquil from the sunburst marking burned into the mage's forehead and their deliberate, monotone manner of speech. As a side effect of the rite, a Tranquil loses all capacity for emotions, as well as the ability to dream. Tranquil can no longer cast spells, and although free will persists, they rarely exercise it. Without emotions, they have nothing to guide them but the will of others. Tranquil possess an abnormal ability to concentrate on even the most tedious tasks.

The forced excising of emotion is controversial among mages, who argue the ethics of the practice. But while non-Tranquil may consider an emotionless existence to be horrifying, the Tranquil do not possess the desire to object.

While the rite makes demon possession difficult, it does not actually render it impossible. Without emotion to mine, spirits are simply uninterested in Tranquil mages. If a spirit is coaxed to touch a Tranquil's mind, however, the rite may be reversed.

The Harrowing

Garahel gathers Wardens from Orlais and the Anderfels, then marches to Starkhaven, where he organizes an alliance between the leaders of the Free Marches. A united army marches north under the griffon banner.

5:22 EXALTED

Antiva is freed from the darkspawn during the infamous battle at Ayesleigh, where Garahel dies defeating the Archdemon. So many darkspawn are slaughtered that many believe they will never return.

5:24 EXALTED

THE ANNULMENT AT DAIRSMUID

When we heard of the injustices against our fellow mages at the White Spire, the Circle of Magi in Val Royeaux, I feared what was to come. Our Circle at Dairsmuid is small and isolated; it exists largely as a façade to appease the Chantry.

When the other Circles rose up, the Chantry sent Seekers across the bay from Ayesleigh to investigate. They found us mixing freely with our families, training female mages in the traditions of the seers, and denounced us as apostates. Perhaps they thought we were spineless robes who could be intimidated with a little bloodshed. Before I was First Enchanter, I was the daughter of Captain Revaud, of the Felicisima Armada. I know how to plan a battle.

They brought with them a small army of templars. We fought. And we might have won. But they invoked the Right of Annulment, with all the unrelenting brutality that allowed. It is their right to put screaming apprentices to the sword, burn our "tainted" libraries, crush irreplaceable artifacts under their heels, tear down the very walls of our home. No mage has the right to disagree.

We of the Dairsmuid Circle wait now, behind barricades. I have sent word to our brother and sister mages of this outrage. When they break through, we will not die alone.

—Final journal entry of First Enchanter Rivella, slain in Dairsmuid, 9:40 Dragon

A Tevinter mage and sword.

Kirkwall's First Enchanter Orsino resisted Knight-Commander Meredith Stannard's Right of Annulment in 9:37 Dragon.

Circle Politics

Under the current Circle hierarchy of authority, the leader of the Circle is the Grand Enchanter, elected by the Circle's First Enchanters. Traditionally, the Grand Enchanter acts as an advisor to the Divine, in addition to leading all mages under Chantry control.

At the head of each local Circle is a First Enchanter, implicitly the leader of all mages in that Circle's jurisdiction. He or she assumes this position for life and retains the right to choose a successor, taking into consideration the "strong suggestions" of the templars. Only in recent years, amid increasing friction, have First Enchanters denied templar choices for succession.

Under the First Enchanter are senior enchanters, who mentor junior enchanters, who in turn mentor apprentices.

THE FRATERNITY OF ENCHANTERS

Mages with strong political leanings may join noble orders known as fraternities, which serve to lobby mage leadership based on ideology. Representatives are traditionally called to vote on contentious issues that affect all mages, such as independence.

Aequitarians, one of the most popular fraternities, advocate temperance and rationality.

The **Libertarians** are a growing fraternity that petitions for greater power for mages. Some Libertarians have pushed for a complete split from the Chantry.

From Libertarian ranks has emerged a more radical group known as the **Resolutionists**, who openly accept apostates and support mage freedom at all costs. Many Resolutionists have connections to a growing mage underground.

The **Isolationists** are a smaller group of mages who believe their gifts are dangerous. They preach withdrawal to remote territories in extreme cases, and seek to avoid conflicts with non-mages.

Loyalists advocate loyalty and obedience to the Chantry.

Lucrosians maintain that the Circle must do what is profitable first, putting wealth before politics.

Nobody but the Wardens seems to care that darkspawn continue to infest the Deep Roads all the way to Orzammar.

5:24 EXALTED

Many griffons are killed during the Fourth Blight. Their numbers decimated, the creatures soon die out.

5:25 EXALTED

MAGIC'S PLACE IN DIFFERENT CULTURES

There's a saying that "humans are lucky to be born and mages lucky to be born in Tevinter." How mages are treated varies greatly among cultures in Thedas. In nations beyond the Chantry's control, mage life can be a blessing or a curse.

The Qunari fear magic's potential, but take its treatment of mages to extremes even the Chantry might consider cruel. In contrast, mages are the backbone of society in the Tevinter Imperium. Their government is a totalitarian magocracy where the rights of mages are both paramount and glorified.

Dwarves are the only common race in Thedas unable to wield magic through natural means. Their resistance to magic, and by extension, lyrium, has allowed them to hone skills in enchantment. Enchanted dwarven weapons are prized throughout Thedas.

Magic in Tevinter

The Tevinter Imperium, in sharp contrast to much of Thedas, celebrates magic use among its people. The ability to wield magic is seen as a mark of favor from the Maker, and the Old Gods before him. Political and religious leaders in the Imperium are all mages.

Because magic use is not discouraged, Tevinter mages have delved far deeper into magic's potential than mages in the rest of Thedas. Spells developed in the northern nation exceed what mages elsewhere would ever dream of casting. Imperial Circles, in contrast to the Circle of Magi, are places of honor where the art of magic is celebrated and freely passed down to young mages. Attendance at a Circle in Tevinter is not mandatory. It is a privilege.

The Imperium's mastery of magic led to an extended period of conquest over much of the continent prior to the rise of the Chantry.

So pervasive is magic's influence in the Imperium that non-mages are a sizable underclass. The lucky non-mages who are not slaves can own land, but cannot hold senior political positions. The non-mage Soporati are said to dream of having a mage child and the prestige that comes with one. Many non-mages in the Imperium live in fear of mages and the power they wield.

Saarebas and the Qun

The Qunari fear and loathe magic. But it is of course still possible for a follower of the Qun to be born with the power to use it. A Qunari mage is known as a saarebas, meaning "dangerous thing." The Qunari treat them with brutality and caution. The seer of Kont-aar once wrote: "Saarebas must be carefully controlled by someone else, an arvaarad, 'one who holds back evil,' because they cannot truly control themselves."

The Qun teaches that those who can control magic cannot control themselves. Because of this, it is common practice for saarebas to be chained, masked, and kept on a short leash. Their lips may, in extreme cases, be stitched together. An arvaarad may also use a rod, similar to one used to control a golem, to restrain a saarebas. All this is done to prevent saarebas from casting spells.

"The evil is not the mage, but the loss of the mage, the loss of the mage's self, and the suffering that inevitably follows," the Seer of Kont-aar wrote in 8:41 Blessed. "The Qunari pity and honor the saarebas, for striving while under constant threat from within is truly selfless, which is the highest virtue of the Qun."

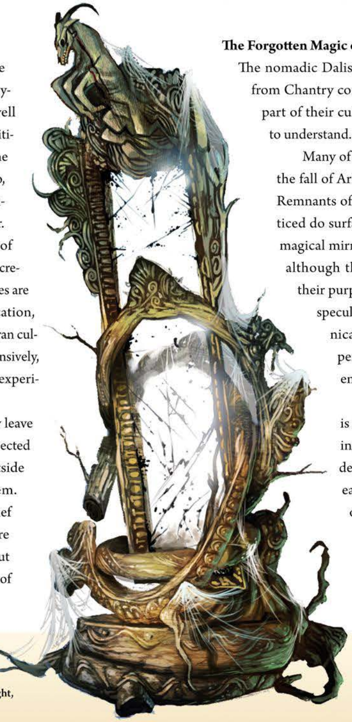
The Qunari take extreme measures to ensure their mages, called saarebas, are controlled.

The Death Mages of Nevarra

In Nevarra, mages have more power than those in most Chantry-controlled nations. They are well organized, wealthy, and hold political sway. Nevarran mages push the boundaries of what magic can do, and are arguably the most well-schooled mages outside Tevinter.

Among the special aspects of magic practice in Nevarra is the secretive Mortalitasi order. These mages are experts in the art of mummification, a burial practice unique to Nevarran culture. The order studies death extensively, and its members are known to experiment with necromancy.

Members of the order rarely leave Nevarra. While they are well respected within the kingdom, mages outside the nation's borders fear them. Propaganda perpetuates the belief in some that the Mortalitasi are actually a death cult who carry out macabre rituals in the catacombs of their Grand Necropolis.



Elves don't know the purpose of ancient eluvians. The magical mirrors are a symbol of lost elvhen ways.

The Forgotten Magic of the Dalish

The nomadic Dalish elves have practiced magic free from Chantry control for generations. It is a proud part of their culture, albeit one they still struggle to understand.

Many of the old elvhen ways were lost with the fall of Arlathan, and magic is no exception. Remnants of the unique magic they once practiced do surface at times. A handful of ancient, magical mirrors called eluvians have survived, although they no longer seem to work and their purpose remains a mystery. Some have speculated that the mirrors allow communication over vast distances. Rumors persist that it may even be possible to enter a working eluvian.

The magic the Dalish now use is largely a product of their surroundings. Their spells have evolved to be deeply rooted in nature, manipulating earthly forces with a heavy emphasis on herbalism and healing. Unlike other spellcasters, Dalish mages do not use any magic involving spirits, as they believe all spirits are dangerous.

Tylus, the first Van Markham king of the Nevarran city-state, comes to power in a coup, killing the ruling Pentaghast. A hero of the recent Blight, he claims to be a descendant of Kordillus Drakon.

5:37 EXALTED

APOSTATES & BLOOD MAGIC

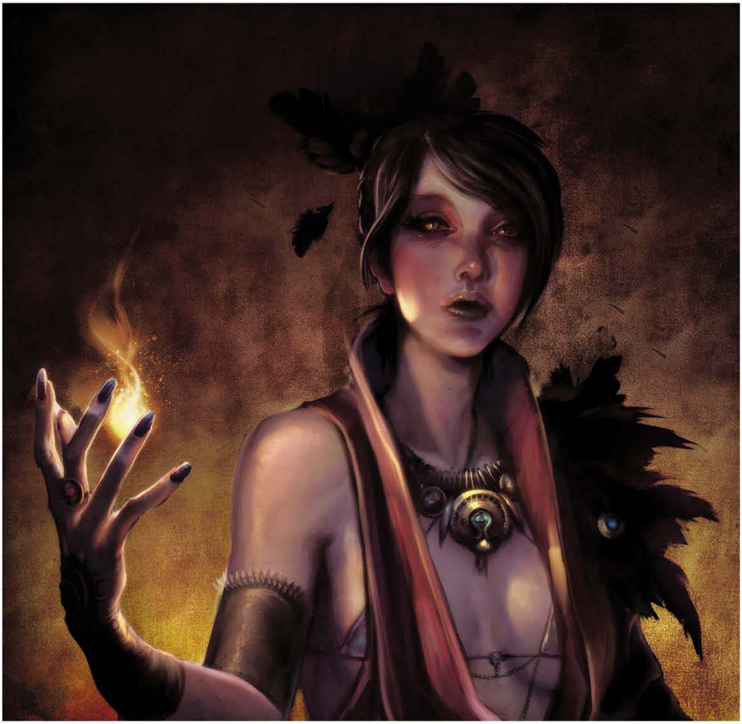
APOSTATES

In Chantry lands, mages who operate outside the Circle have historically been dubbed apostates, a loaded term synonymous with "rebel mage."

The most dangerous of the apostates are the maleficarum, who actively pursue dangerous and forbidden schools of magic, including blood magic. The word "maleficar" comes from the Tevinter language, an old word meaning one who is depraved. Although many apostates never practice the forbidden arts, the stigma is such that many look upon all apostates as maleficarum.

Also among the ranks of apostates are hedge mages, who are untrained and wield powers developed independent of standard teachings. Hedge mages have been known to possess unusual, sometimes previously unseen abilities. Often their skills may be harmless enough that they are ignored by authorities.

Traditionally, the Chantry's opinion is that any mage who lives outside of the Circle is breaking the commandments of the



Morrigan, a hero of the Fifth Blight, is an apostate.

King Tylus Van Markham turns the western Free Marches against the growing power of Orlais. He wins several major border wars against the Orlesians, expanding Nevarra into a proper nation.

5:38 EXALTED

Calenhad Theirin is crowned king in Denerim, uniting the long-warring tribes of Ferelden under a single banner.

5:42 EXALTED

Maker and must be hunted. The Chantry believes apostates are at greater risk of falling prey to demons, being possessed, and becoming abominations.

It is not uncommon for mages to refuse to bow to Chantry control. Though it is a dangerous path, rebel mages survive even in nations with a heavy Chantry or Qunari presence, hiding in plain sight or banding together on the fringes of society.

There are also mages, technically apostates, who adhere to traditions predating the Circle's creation. This kind of apostate may be a shaman in a barbarian village, a local alchemist who makes love charms, a hermit witch who casts curses on intruders, and most notably a keeper of the Dalish.

The line between mage and apostate is blurring as beneficial magic use outside Chantry law becomes more common. High-profile mages like those involved in the quelling of the Fifth Blight in Ferelden and those who fought in the mage-templar conflicts in Kirkwall and Val Royeaux have complicated debates about the definition of an apostate and where they fit in society.

Anders is an apostate mage who claimed responsibility for destroying the chantry in Kirkwall.

THE FIRST INQUISITION

The birth of the Chantry took place more than nine ages ago, and the mists of time have obscured what were once well-known facts. It is commonly believed that the Chantry alone created the templars and the Circle of Magi. Few recall that there was ever an Inquisition. Those who do believe it predated the Chantry, hunting cultists and mages in a reign of terror that ended only upon its transformation into the Templar Order. This, however, is not quite the truth.

One must keep in mind the state of Thedas prior to the Chantry's creation. It was a world where the only source of order, the Tevinter Imperium, had fallen apart. People blamed magic for the death of Andraste, the Blight, the terror they saw every day—and not without basis. Abominations and demons rampaged the countryside. No one was safe. The Seekers of Truth were initially formed by disparate groups of men and women, determined to restore order because no one else would do what was necessary. The truth they sought, the question they tried to answer, was how to restore sanity in a world gone mad.

Was theirs a reign of terror? Perhaps. But all evidence shows they were just as vigilant in their protection of mages as they were of regular people. Any time they intervened, an ad hoc trial was convened to determine the guilty party. This even application of justice led to their poor reputation, as the Seekers came down against every group at one time or another, their "Inquisition" gaining notoriety as being on no one's side other than their own.

They believed themselves good people, however, and followers of the Maker's true commandments. This was never more evident than when they laid down their own banner in support of the fledgling Chantry. They believed, with all their heart, that the Templar Order was the answer a desperate Thedas needed most in a terrible time. Ultimately, the Inquisition was composed of independent idealists and not Chantry zealots, and that is the truth.

—From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar*, by Brother Genitivi*

Divine Rosamund dies after fifty-five years in power. She leaves a legacy as one of the most compassionate women to ever occupy the post.

5:71 EXALTED

Divine Amara III is elected. The famously fanatical leader is said to enjoy bonfires fueled by burning maleficar. Her reign does not last long.

5:71 EXALTED

BLOOD MAGIC

Not up for debate, however, is the practice of blood magic. Using pain or death to cast or strengthen spells is forbidden throughout Thedas.

The ancient Tevinter magisters were the first to experiment with blood magic. They saw it as a means to achieve greater power in all schools. Over time, they discovered spells that could only be worked by spilling blood. Rituals involving violence became a significant part of the Old God worship, and blood mages rose to incredible heights of power and influence.

Blood magic allows feats otherwise thought impossible. "Although lyrium will allow a mage to send his conscious mind into the Fade, blood would allow him to find the sleeping minds of others, view their dreams, and even influence or dominate their thoughts," famed First Enchanter Josephus once wrote. "Just as treacherous, blood magic allows the Veil to be opened completely so that demons may physically pass through it into our world."

Josephus wrote that it was once common practice for a Tevinter magister to keep a number of slaves on hand, to use their blood to strengthen spells. A rare Tevinter maleficar may still use slaves for this purpose.

With the rise of the Chant of Light and subsequent decline of Old God worship, the use of blood magic was all but stamped out across Thedas. Chantry faithful believe those who practice blood magic are criminals, as common wisdom holds there is no way to use blood magic with good intentions. They say all blood mages who use their own blood will eventually find themselves tempted by the additional power to be gained from spilling the blood of others.

Queen Madrigal of Antiva is assassinated on a hunt, stabbed in the chest by four steel blades.

5:99 EXALTED

Divine Theodosia I receives news of Queen Madrigal's assassination. The image of the queen with four swords plunged into her chest haunts the Divine's dreams that night. Upon awakening, she declares the Steel Age.

5:99 EXALTED

Dragons are hunted nearly to extinction thanks to methods pioneered by the Pentaghast family of Nevarra. The Pentaghasts become known across the continent as legendary dragon hunters.

The Qunari land in Par Vollen in massive numbers and handily conquer it—unbeknownst to the rest of the continent.

STEEL AGE

6:15 STEEL

6:30 STEEL

While blood magic is discouraged even in the pro-mage Imperium, it is still widely, if quietly, practiced there. Since most of the heroes of Tevinter folklore used or benefited from blood magic, the practice does not carry as much stigma with most Tevinters. However, since Andraste specifically spoke against blood magic, it has been removed from public ceremonies and is not formally taught in Imperial Circles.

In the Imperium, the traditions of blood magic are now passed down quietly from master to apprentice and parent to child. To this day, even the most devout mage in the Imperial Chantry knows at least a little blood magic.

The more violent the pain or death used in blood magic, the more powerful a spell becomes.

RESPONSIBLE BLOOD MAGIC

Let me correct you, apprentice. While it is true that blood magic is woven through the history of Tevinter, there are good reasons, quite aside from the Chantry's sermons, that such arts are now frowned upon. Consider the ancient magisters who once attempted to map the Fade itself. A worthy goal, perhaps, but a costly one. When their spells exhausted their lyrium supply, the magisters spilled the blood of countless slaves. To what end? The shifting nature of the Fade made the effort futile, and so much death left the magisters open to possession by demons. Wasteful!

Some still idolize Tirena of the Rock, who used blood magic against the Qunari during the Steel Age. They say she cut her flesh on the shore of Marnas Pell as the dreadnoughts sailed in, turned her spells against their crews, and boiled the very blood in their veins. A terrifying display, to be sure, but against Qunari? It only made them more determined when they besieged the ports of Carastes.

And what of Magister Calanthus, that fool who believed he could make himself the "Ascended Man" with blood magic? Thirty-three slaves died in that rite, and Calanthus became an abomination so horrific that his apprentices tore out their eyes at the sight of him.

You quote the example of the lovers Crescens and Seraphinian. Yes, Seraphinian offered his own blood to cure Crescens of her wasting disease, and Crescens lived a long life. But if the noblest use of blood magic still calls for the death of a good man, is that not enough reason to reconsider?

—*Letter from Magister Aesthia to her apprentice, 7:71 Storm*

Mages who experiment with blood magic are more susceptible to demonic spirits, such as pride demons (opposite), and risk becoming abominations by way of possession.

Qunari ships arrive en masse in Seheron and northern Rivain. The First Qunari War begins in earnest.

6:32 STEEL

chapter five

RELIGION

Qunari advances claim much of the Imperium, Rivain, and Antiva. They begin an assault on the Free Marches.

6:42 STEEL

The Avvar organize forces under the great warlord Balak and sweep into the heart of the Ferelden Valley in massive numbers. The bannorn is put to the torch.

6:50 STEEL

THEDAS WOULD NOT BE WHAT IT IS WITHOUT RELIGION. Faith in a higher power drives the history and politics behind every nation on the continent—from the Maker's faithful in Orlais and Ferelden, to the brutal societies of Seheron and Par Vollen, where the Qun is law. Empires rise to glory or fall in ruin over the answers to essential questions like what happens after death and what causes the Blight.

"Intelligence is asking why you exist," Orlesian emperor and Chantry founder Kordillus Drakon once said. "Power is discovering the answer."

THE MAKER & THE CHANTRY

No one group in recorded history has impacted life in Thedas more than the Chantry. The influence of this church of the Maker prevails across most of the continent's kingdoms, and the bulk of humanity pays at least lip service to its tenets. Belief in the Maker has started wars and forced those outside the Chantry to the fringes of society. Even the most common calendar in Thedas, which breaks time into ages, is kept by the Chantry.

At the heart of this monotheistic religion are the teachings of the prophet Andraste, collected in the Chantry's holy book, the Chant of Light. Chantry faithful believe in the divine authority of the Maker and worship him in temples called chantries.

Their faith is rooted in four core principles:

I. Magic is a corrupting influence in the world.
II. Humankind's sin of pride destroyed the Golden City and created the darkspawn, terrible embodiments of that sin.
III. Andraste was the bride of the Maker, a prophet and martyr whose ultimate sacrifice must be remembered and honored.
IV. Humankind has sinned and must seek penance to earn the Maker's forgiveness. When all peoples unite to praise the Maker, he will return to the world and make it a paradise.

THE RISE & FALL OF ANDRASTE

It is said that the Maker's prophet, so revered by class-obsessed Orlais, wasn't born to Val Royeaux nobles, or even Nevarran royals, but barbarians in a fractured land of dog lords. Prevailing wisdom says Andraste came into this world in the small village of Denerim, now a bustling capital. Her father was chief of one of the largest Alamarri tribes in what is presently northern Ferelden.

From an early age, Andraste suffered troubling dreams of a then obscure god known as the Maker. Slowly, she began to make sense of these dreams, and came to interpret them as answers to the questions that plagued her. The Maker was a supreme being, *the* supreme being, who had abandoned the world and the people he created when they took up worship of the Old Gods.

According to the Chant of Light, the Maker emerged from his retreat after falling in love with Andraste and the beautiful song she sang for him. The Maker came to Andraste and offered to take her away from the flawed mortal world as his divine bride. Reluctant to leave her life and new husband Maferath, she begged the Maker to instead return to his people and create a new paradise in Thedas. The Maker agreed to this only if Andraste convinced his people to destroy their false idols. To aid her in this task, the Maker promised to use his power against her enemies. Andraste thus became the Maker's betrothed.

Iconic representations of Andraste vary widely across Thedas. This Fereldan statue portrays Andraste as a warrior.

The Avvar are pushed out of Ferelden proper. The period results in one of the worst famines in Fereldan history. Memories of Avvar savagery sour relations between the barbarians and Fereldan kings for ages.

6:52 STEEL

Intricate tapestries or stained-glass images on chantry walls are used to tell the story of Andraste's life and death.

Prophet of the Maker

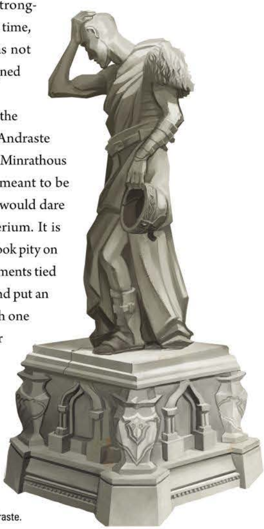
Andraste began to preach openly of the Maker as the true creator of all things. Among his commandments was that magic must serve man, not rule over him. The idea proved attractive to the oppressed people of Tevinter-occupied nations in southern Thedas. They had long suffered under the power of sorcerer kings who used the teachings of the Old Gods to justify their rule. Andraste taught that it was one of these Old Gods that turned on the world, wreaking havoc as an Archdemon in the First Blight. This only discouraged worship of the Old Gods further, and any remaining confidence in the ruling magisters dwindled. Upon hearing of the miracles and victories that followed Andraste on her quest, belief in the one true god who fought by her side swept across Thedas like wildfire. With Maferath as general, Andraste's armies grew, expanding north and bringing rebellion.

Together, Andraste and Maferath carved a path into the very heart of the Imperium: the capital, Minrathous. West of the city, at the Battle of Valarian Fields, they won a hard-fought victory to prove the Maker's might.

Maferath's Betrayal

Not all was well, however. Maferath, as valiantly as he fought on behalf of the Maker, was believed to be gripped by jealousy of his wife's betrothal to their god. Her superior power and influence also may have vexed him. Following the Battle of Valarian Fields, he made a secret pact with Hessarian, then the embattled Archon of the Imperium, declaring a truce in exchange for Andraste's capture. Imperium forces caught up with Andraste as she traveled to a stronghold in Nevarra. At the time, Maferath's betrayal was not made public, and he feigned outrage at the capture.

At the command of the Archon, they burned Andraste alive in front of a grand Minrathous crowd. The death was meant to be a message to any who would dare wage war on the Imperium. It is written that Hessarian took pity on Andraste in her last moments tied to that burning stake, and put an end to her suffering with one thrust of his sword. Later the Archon claimed that the voice of the Maker ordered him to do it. When he saw



An Orlesian sculpture depicts a sorrowful Maferath after he betrayed his wife, Andraste.

Human resistance finally manages to chip away at Qunari lines in Tevinter.

6:85 STEEL

Divine Hortensia III names the Storm Age, foreseeing a growing storm of violence across Thedas

6:99 STEEL

OF GODS & DOUBT

Forgive me. I claimed belief once, swore with tears in my eyes that Our Lady was the Light, and through Her blessing, I knew the Maker. But I cannot brook the division between what I have tried to know, and what I cannot ignore.

Is the Maker less silent than the profane elven pantheon, or the Old Gods of Tevinter? And what of Archdemons that are not silent at all? We have real, ongoing strife—all of us, every people and creed—that we each blame on the heretical actions of others. And yet if any one of our truths was Truth, that blame would be impossible. It is not just that these claims of divinity cannot coexist. It is that no other claims could be made, if any one of those worshipped were ever truly "god."

I am shamed my faith cannot withstand so pedestrian an argument. All I have learned in my time here is fear.

—Initiate Micaela Chevais

Go as you must, as must we all, but know that the only thing worse than a faith broken, is a faith untested.

—Correspondence and teachings of Mother Hevara, Val Royeaux archive

her blood spill, they say he became a faithful servant of her god. Others alleged that Hessarian only converted to the faith when he realized he could not fight the influence of her cult on his people.

A band of Andraste's followers smuggled her ashes out of Minrathous to bury them in Ferelden, near the place of her birth, but the ashes were famously lost along the way.

Maferath took charge of the lands conquered in Andraste's name, and ruled them for the better part of a decade. His support waned when he refused to go to war with the Imperium to avenge his wife's death. When Hessarian publicly professed his conversion to belief in the Maker, he also exposed Maferath's betrayal. Maferath's own sons overthrew him and divided his lands to found the nations today known as Orlais, Nevarra, and Ferelden. What became of Maferath is a mystery, but his name is now synonymous with betrayal.

Birth of the Chantry

It is written that the Maker once again abandoned his people after Andraste's execution. Andraste is said to have ascended to his side, where she continues to watch over Thedas.

After Andraste's death, her cult had no central leadership, and believers carried on her teachings in fragmented pockets. It took Kordillus Drakon, the legendary first emperor of Orlais, to centralize the movement and solidify its power under the organization known as the Chantry. Drakon was a fervent believer in the Maker, often claiming the god had personally charged him with ministering the Chant of Light. He used the Second Blight to expand the Orlesian Empire and, by extension, the influence of his Chantry.

After losing the Fereldan throne to her cousin Arland, Sophia Dryden joins the Grey Wardens and rises to the rank of Warden-Commander in Ferelden.

Arland is a tyrant. Banns approach Sophia, asking her to intercede. She agrees and attempts a coup against her cousin. Arland bans Wardens from Ferelden and kills Sophia at Soldier's Peak.

STORM AGE

7:5 STORM

7:5 STORM

At the time of Drakon's death, the Chantry had spread far and wide, and Drakon was declared "Anointed." The emperor's image is now as prominent in Orlesian chantries as Andraste's.

The Chantry continues actively to spread Andraste's teachings, believing that the Maker will only return to Thedas if people from all corners of the world praise him.

THE CHANT OF LIGHT

The Chant of Light is the primary religious text of the Chantry, a holy book that contains the core teachings of Andraste. Her followers wrote the Chant, though portions are said to be transcribed directly from the songs she sang of the Maker. A written copy can be found in every chantry. Because many Thedosians are illiterate, copies outside chantries are uncommon and usually owned only by the very rich.

The Chant of Light was first sung sixteen years after Andraste's execution. The full text is lengthy and only sung regularly at the Grand Cathedral in Val Royeaux.

Beyond prayers and songs of praise, it covers history from the perspective of the faith: the Maker's creation of the world, the rise of Old God worship and subsequent abandonment of the Maker, the life and death of Andraste, the First Blight, and the prophecy of the Maker's return.

There are also dissonant verses removed from the wider text because they reference controversial topics, such as Andraste's elven disciple Shartan.

All faithful must recite the Chant at least once a week.

THE CHANT ON THE VOID

All that the Maker has wrought is in His hand
Beloved and precious to Him.
Where the Maker has turned His face away,
Is a Void in all things;
In the world, in the Fade,
In the hearts and minds of men.

Passing out of the world, in that Void shall they wander;
O unrepentant, faithless, treacherous,
They who are judged and found wanting
Shall know forever the loss of the Maker's love.
Only Our Lady shall weep for them.

—*Threnodies 12:5*

CHANTRY BELIEFS

Andraste taught that evil exists because of humankind's pride. For this reason, Thedas brought the darkspawn upon itself. When the Maker returns, he will destroy all evil, including the darkspawn.

The first Exalted March on the Qunari is called by both the Imperial Chantry to retake Seheron and the Chantry to free Rivain.

7:25 STORM

The second Exalted March on the Qunari ends in disaster, with the Qunari capturing most of Antiva.

7:52 STORM

Until this return, the faithful believe the Maker watches, not so much an absent god as a patient observer. They do not believe the Maker will perform miracles on their behalf. But he will shed a tear for the suffering of those who do not deserve it.

The Chantry's interpretation of Andraste's teachings emphasizes death, guilt, and the differences among races and genders.

Fire: Andraste went up in flames, her sins cleansed as she died. Flame is now a symbol of purity in the Chantry. Each temple maintains a brazier lit with an eternal flame in her memory, including the famed Holy Brazier at the Grand Cathedral. It is considered a bad omen for a Chantry brazier to go out. Chantry members may also ritually burn themselves, passing their hand over flame or burning a paper upon which their sins are written. In extreme cases, the faithful may undergo branding or even self-immolation.

Penance: Guilt is a virtue in the Chantry. Andraste taught that Thedosians have sinned in the eyes of the Maker and all must atone for this. Even the poor and unsavory are seen as requiring this atonement. Chantry charity focuses on these underclasses.

Death: At death, the Chantry believes spirits of the virtuous rise to the side of the Maker. The spirits of sinners are not so lucky, doomed to spend the afterlife wandering the Fade, forever seeking the Maker's grace. The Chantry burn their dead, a reflection of Andraste's fate.

The Exalted and Anointed: The Chantry has called Exalted Marches against the elves, the Qunari, and, more than once, the Imperium. The faithful who give their lives to these holy wars earn a special place at the side of the Maker as the "Exalted." A still greater honor for service is to be declared "Anointed," those seen as the hands of the Maker. This title is exceptionally rare.

Magic: The Chantry believes magic is a terrible gift, corrupting all if left unchecked. Andraste preached extreme caution with magic, and regulating its use is one of the Chantry's central missions.

ANDRASTE'S DISCIPLES

Hessarian, the Redeemed: Ordered Andraste's execution but later repented. He is credited with turning the Imperium to the worship of the Maker.

Brona: Andraste's mother.

Hector: Lord of the fortress of Nevarra, one of Andraste's great strongholds. When Maferath betrayed Andraste and she was captured, Hector was murdered.

Shartan: Leader of the elven slave rebellion. He and other elves joined Andraste's cause against the Imperium after she freed them.

Justinia: A Tevinter slave and a friend to Andraste. She stood by Andraste in her war against the Imperium. The first Divine took Justinia's name in tribute.

Havard: The disciple who gathered Andraste's ashes and took them to a safe place in the mountains.

The Qunari land in Estwatch and use it as a launching point for fleets of dreadnoughts.

Raiders from Llomerryn unite under the banner of the Felicisima Armada. Together, their pirate fleets help turn the tide against the Qunari at sea.

7:54 STORM

7:55 STORM

A towering statue of Andraste dominates the apse of a Chantry cathedral.

Gender: Gender roles are clearly defined in the Chantry, which sees women as the purer sex. Only women can be priests. Only a woman can be Divine. Men are all judged by Maferath's betrayal, and the Chantry does not permit them to rise to any senior spiritual role. They may be brothers at most, expected to study and serve, but never lead. The exception to this is the Templar Order, where most members, including those in positions of authority, are male.

Nonhumans: The Chantry began and has continued to be a predominantly human organization. Other races are seen to be further from the Maker. The elves have their false pantheon of idols. The dwarves worship themselves. The Qunari are worst of all, actively crushing worship of the Maker and desecrating Chantry values in the name of the Qun. For these reasons, other races are considered all the more worthy of saving. The Chantry believes the Maker won't return until even the Qunari sing his name.

ELVEN RELIGION

So complete was the elven fall that no artifacts of their culture survive from before the arrival of humans. The eldest of the Dalish have assembled a patchwork of what might have been, and believe the lost glory of their people was unparalleled.

They claim elves ruled Thedas from an ancient nation called Elvhenan. They had their own pantheon of gods who were said to bestow all life's gifts and dole out its punishments. A few even claim their ancestors were immortal, and it was only the arrival of humans—"shemlen" or "quicklings"—that brought death to the "elvhen" people.

It is all conjecture. Belief persists in a few forgotten corners, but if elven gods existed, they are long silent.

THE ELVEN PANTHEON

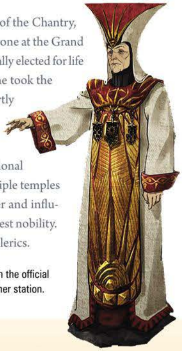
According to Dalish lore, the world was created by Mythal, goddess of motherhood, justice, and protection, and Elgar'nan, god of fatherhood and vengeance.

Their eldest children are remembered as twin brothers. Falon'Din was the Friend of the Dead, who guided elders on journeys of enlightenment in their long sleep and later carried

CHANTRY HIERARCHY

Divine: The Divine is the revered head of the Chantry, which she oversees from her sunburst throne at the Grand Cathedral in Val Royeaux. She is traditionally elected for life by the College of Clerics. The first Divine took the throne at the start of the Divine Age, shortly after the founding of the Chantry.

Grand Clerics: Grand clerics are powerful representatives of the Divine in regional matters. Each grand cleric oversees multiple temples in a region or city, and enjoys the power and influence reserved for their jurisdiction's highest nobility. Together they make up the College of Clerics.



Divine Beatrix III adorned in the official robes and headdress of her station.

7:55 STORM

A third and final Exalted March on the Qunari is called.

7:56 STORM

The Qunari hit the Free Marches hard. Starkhaven and Ostwick are able to hold them back, but Kirkwall is invaded.

Triptychs are another common way that Andraste's life is expressed through Chantry artistry.

Mothers: Mothers are priests who tend to a particular chantry. The senior priest at the temple is known as a revered mother. Mothers lead recitations of the Chant, as well as the preaching and practice of Andraste's teachings.

Brothers and Sisters: Under Chantry mothers come the rank-and-file members who devote their lives to the Chantry. Brothers and sisters may come from all walks of life, be they nobles, orphans, or even criminals. They are given an education based on the virtues of the Chantry and occupy a variety of roles. Clerics may be Chantry academics who pursue and preserve its knowledge. A senior cleric, called an elder, typically maintains a chantry's archives.

Chanters: Chanters are among the most devout members of the Chantry. They take strict oaths that include helping others above themselves and never uttering a word that is not from the Chant. Chanters are often penitent sinners looking for atonement.

Templar Order: The templars are a proud and disciplined order of mostly human, mostly male warriors. Historically they are the policing arm of the Chantry. The primary focus of the templars is to restrict the use of magic.

Templar practices have proven controversial, notably the use of highly addictive lyrium to resist magic. The order has been accused of exploiting the addictions of its members, forcing them to stay with the promise of a steady supply of the rare and powerful mineral.

A large contingent of templars has, in recent years, severed ties with the Chantry over differences regarding mage freedom. Nonetheless, its core remains dedicated to the teachings of Andraste, in particular the importance of controlling magic.

Seekers of Truth: The other arm of Andrastian justice is far smaller and more secretive. The Seekers are the Divine's investigators—highly skilled agents that root out hidden threats to the Chantry and its interests. While Seeker leadership tends to run parallel to the templars, senior Seekers ultimately outrank any templar. Traditionally the Seekers answered directly to the Divine. However, like templars, many Seekers now reject the authority of the Divine.

Kirkwall is liberated from Qunari invaders by famed Orlesian chevalier Ser Michel Lafaille. He is appointed the city's first viscount. Kirkwall falls under Orlesian control.

7:60 STORM

The Kirkwall City Guard is founded.

7:60 STORM

them beyond the Veil in death. His brother Dirthamen gave the elves the gift of knowledge, and taught them the value of loyalty and faith in family.

There was also their daughter Andruil, goddess of the hunt, who watched over the animals and taught the elves to respect them.

Andruil's godly sister Sylaise, the Hearthkeeper, stayed home to sing and make art while wild Andruil frolicked. She is credited with teaching the elves to use fire, heal with herbs and magic, and spin fibers to make thread and rope.

Their brother, the god of craft June, used Sylaise's lessons to teach the elves to fashion bows for hunting Andruil's gifts.

THE ELVEN PANTHEON

Andruil: Goddess of the hunt

Dirthamen: God of secrets and knowledge

Elgar'nan: God of vengeance and the sun, the All-Father

Falon'Din: Guide and Friend of the Dead, god of fortune

Fen'Harel: The Dread Wolf, trickster god

Ghilan'nain: Goddess of navigation, Mother of the Halla

June: God of craft

Mythal: The Great Protector, the All-Mother

Sylaise: The Hearthkeeper

The Felicisima Armada takes Estwatch following a massive naval battle with the Qunari.

The third Exalted March on the Qunari ends in a stalemate. The Qunari have only one stronghold left on the continent: the city of Kont-aar.

7:78 STORM

7:84 STORM

THE LADY OF THE SKIES

My father died with honor, so we gave him to the sky. My husband and I led the procession to the peaks, singing. With knife and hammer, we scoured the flesh and split the bones. As we left, I saw the carrion crows descending to carry my father home in pieces. I knew the Lady of the Skies smiled.

Our tribe has never failed to do the Lady honor. The flights of her birds reveal the future to our shaman. We sacrifice wolves upon her altars. In return, she sends prize game in the hunt and victory in war. When a couple is bound together by the sacred knots, it is the Lady's hymn we sing.

We Avvar never leave the ice and the stone. We never bowed to Calenhad as the Alamarri did, nor shall we be enslaved by the words of their new prophet. We are constant as the sky, and from us our Lady shall have her due.

—From the meditations of Anashe, Avvar tribeswoman and falconer

Andruil's influence was wide and she had many followers. Among them was Ghilan'nain, an elf chosen by Andruil to rise to a godly rank as Mother of the Halla for her devotion to the animals.

GODS IMPRISONED

The Dalish tell stories of an ancient conflict during the reign of the elven gods. They say the pantheon, led by Mythal and Elgar'nan, warred endlessly with gods of terror, malice, spite, and pestilence known as the Forgotten Ones.

In between was Fen'Harel, a god of tricks who walked as kin with the pantheon, but was also regarded by the Forgotten Ones as one of their own.

The Dalish believe Fen'Harel conspired to lock away both good and evil to have Elvhenan for himself. It is said that he promised a truce between the good gods and the Forgotten Ones.

He sealed the gods away in their respective realms, leaving the elves to fend for themselves. It was then that the humans came, and, later under Tevinter, the great elven city of Arlathan fell.

"After the destruction of Arlathan, when the gods could no longer hear our prayers, it is said that Fen'Harel spent centuries in a far corner of the earth, giggling madly and hugging himself in glee," wrote Gisharel, once the keeper of the Dalish clan Ralaferin.

This story of elven downfall, whether true or not, serves to reinforce and justify the divide between human and elf.

RELIGION IN TEVINTER

OLD GODS

The Old Gods were a set of seven dragon deities worshiped by the majority of humans in Thedas prior to the rise of the Chantry. Worship of the Old Gods first gained popularity in the ancient Tevinter Imperium. As the Imperium's influence spread across Thedas, so too did worship of these dragons. Many elves enslaved by the Imperium were forced to worship them instead of their own gods.

Two main factors contributed to the decline of Old God worship: the rise of Blights, blamed on Old Gods that awakened as blighted Archdemons, and the spread of the Chantry, which taught that the Old Gods were spirits that betrayed the Maker.

Archdemons are said to be the physical form of the Old Gods.

History

Before there were the magisters or a unified Imperium, there were the Dreamers. The first Dreamers emerged from the tribes of the Neromenian people. They claimed to have visions of a Realm of the Gods, and as proof of their visions, demonstrated miraculous powers.

The legendary Thalsian was the first Dreamer. It is said he communicated with and learned blood magic from the Old God Dumat after encountering him in visions of what is now assumed to be the Fade. The Neromenian tribes, who had worshipped fallen heroes reborn as dragons, adopted Dreamers

Early Tevinter magisters used blood magic rituals in their worship of the Old Gods.

Much of northern Thedas is laid waste in the decades of Qunari invasion. Rebuilding is considered more important than driving the Qunari from Kont-aar.

7:84 STORM

A meeting between the Qunari and envoys from all Thedosian nations except Tevinter is called at Llomerryn. The Llomerryn Accords are signed, ushering in an uneasy peace.

7:84 STORM

The Old God Urthemiel, awakened as the Dragon of Beauty, heralded the Fifth Blight.

as their leaders, and began to instead worship the Dreamers' gods, also as dragons. By the time the Imperium unified under the Dreamer Darinius, the first Archon, worship of the Old Gods was ubiquitous. Darinius established the magisterium from the priesthood of these seven gods. Thalsian was named an honorary Archon.

Worship of the seven Old Gods was the religion of the Imperium for hundreds of years. Great temples were built in their honor, with each Old God depicted as a great dragon.

The organized worship of the Old Gods was at its highest prior to the First Blight, when it is written that Dumat himself rose from his prison as the first Archdemon. While the Chantry insists the darkspawn created the first Archdemon, some ancient lore says that Dumat created the first darkspawn and led them against Thedas. Either way, Old God faithful were betrayed to discover one of their deities could turn against them.

The end of war with the Qunari and the birth of twin boys to Emperor Etienne I of Orlais usher in the Blessed Age.

Kirkwall, still under Orlesian control after the Qunari Wars, erupts in unrest. Citizens rebel and take the city for themselves.

7:99 STORM

BLESSED AGE

8:05 BLESSED

THE SEVEN OLD GODS

Andoral: Dragon of Slaves

Dumat: Dragon of Silence

Lusacan: Dragon of Night

Razikale: Dragon of Mystery

Toth: Dragon of Fire

Urthemiel: Dragon of Beauty

Zazikel: Dragon of Freedom

Worship of the Old Gods continued to wane, especially with the creation of the Imperial Chantry under Hessarian. By the time the Second Blight ended, spots of worship persisted only in isolated pockets. The Chantry was thorough in stamping most out, razing temples and driving the congregants underground. The temples that survived were converted to Circles of the Imperium.

A rare few cults are still devoted to those two Old Gods that have not risen as Archdemons. The dragon still remains Tevinter's most prominent symbol—even if its true significance has been largely forgotten.

IMPERIAL CHANTRY

A stained-glass depiction of Archon Hessarian as he mercifully kills Andraste.

Following Andraste's execution in Minrathous, the prophet's barbarian hordes dispersed. But the influence of her teachings remained. Ten years to the day after Andraste's execution, Archon Hessarian publicly announced he heard the Maker's voice when he put his sword through Andraste. Hessarian declared himself a disciple of Andraste and admitted that the prophet was betrayed by her husband Maferath.

Hessarian declared the Maker the one true god, and Andrastianism the religion of the Imperium. The priests of the Seven Temples were given a choice: convert or die.

Most of the high-ranking clergy, including nearly all of the ruling Altus magisters, refused to give up their Old Gods. Many of the underclass Laetan mages also refused to convert to a god that maligned magic. But the common people of the non-mage Soporati overwhelmingly supported Hessarian, and gleefully participated in casting down their magisters. Bloodshed followed in a violent overthrowing of the magisters in a period known as the Transfiguration. The Imperium became the first Exalted State, more than one hundred years before Orlais.

To this day, Hessarian is a hero to the common classes and considered the great reformer of the Imperium.

In the bloodbath, some mages came forward and converted. Many who converted claimed to have encountered Andraste's spirit in the Fade, and this meeting forever changed them.

With the High Priests dead, Hessarian repurposed the Old God temples, even authorizing the reconstruction of the ruined Temple of Dumat. They became centers of study and education for mages, in essence the first Circles of Magi. The Maker's greatest commandment was that magic must serve man, so it

In a grand gesture, Qunari in Par Vollen welcome a group of Rivaini diplomats. The visit dispels many myths about Qunari society.

8:10 BLESSED

The Orlesian Empire, under the direction of the "Mad Emperor" Reville, invades Ferelden for the second time.

8:24 BLESSED

During the Tevinter Transfiguration, temples to the Old Gods were repurposed as schools for mages.

was Hessarian's intention that the mages of the Imperium must be properly prepared for a lifetime of public service to Tevinter.

Under Hessarian's dual leadership as Archon and head of the Chantry, Soporati were admitted to the clergy of a Tevinter religion for the first time in Imperium history. For a hundred years, the highest-ranking clerics in the Imperium were non-mages and actually held seats in the Magisterium, but this gradually shifted back as the Altus who survived the Transfiguration converted and joined the new priesthood. The long-standing association in Tevinter culture between the Altus and spiritual authority restored mages to roles of prominence in the Chantry within a few generations.

The Schism

One hundred and ten years after the Transfiguration, Orlesian emperor Kordillus Drakon decreed Divine Justinia I head of the Andrastian religion. This greatly upset the people of Tevinter, who had organized the religion while Orlais was still a fragmented land of warring tribes. The Tevinter considered their country the Holy Land, as Andraste had lived and died there. What was Orlais? Relations between the Tevinter Chantry and Drakon's Orlesian Chantry were strained from the onset. In an effort to appease the Orlesian Chantry, the Archon's role in the Chantry was reduced to a ceremonial position, and authority over the faith was transferred to the grand clerics.

The grand clerics of Tevinter repeatedly petitioned for recognition by the Orlesian Chantry, and were refused on the grounds that the Imperial Chantry admitted men into the priesthood. At the time, the Orlesian Chantry was unaware that mages were also members of the Tevinter clergy.

Unlike the Chantry, the Imperial Chantry allows males to become priests.

Fereldan King Vanedrin Theirin is killed by Orlesian invaders. Calenhad's sword, Nemetos, is lost.

Young King Brandel, Vanedrin's son, is unable to unite the country beneath him, and Ferelden is mired in blood and battle.

Statuary portrays various Chantry disciples and martyrs.

In 2:80 Glory, the Orlesians called an Exalted March on Starkhaven to free the Marcher city-state from Tevinter rule. They did so to prevent Tevinter from once again gaining ground in the important region. After the Third Blight, the Chantry in Orlais promoted the story that it was the ancient magisters of Tevinter who brought the Blights on the world through their heresy. Anti-Tevinter and anti-mage sentiment grew along with the divide between the two powerful nations.

It was ultimately the interpretation of the Maker's second commandment, "Magic must serve man, not rule over him," that split the Imperial and Orlesian Chantries. The Tevinters claimed that the commandment only meant that magic should not be used to control the minds of others. They said the best way for magic to serve man was to serve the rulers of man. When the clerics of Tevinter altered the Chant of Light to reflect this interpretation of the commandment, the Divine in Val Royeaux ordered the clerics to revert to the original Chant. The Tevinter temples refused, claiming corruption within Val Royeaux.

When the Divine declared the entire Tevinter clergy heretics, the Archon responded by appointing Grand Cleric Valhail (who also happened to be one of the most prominent members of the Tevinter Circle) as Divine of the Tevinter Chantry. This magic user, dubbed the "Black Divine" by the Orlesians, was reviled outside of Tevinter, and his existence was a slap in the face to the Chantry in Val Royeaux.

After four successive Exalted Marches failed to force the "heretics" into submission, the Imperial Chantry solidified as a distinct body outside the Chantry proper.

The Imperial Chantry Today

While most aspects of the Imperial Chantry's teachings are the same, all issues against magic have been dropped and male priests are quite prevalent. All the revered mothers and fathers and grand clerics are members of one of the Circles, as it is virtually impossible for a mage to rise to a prominent position in Tevinter without belonging to one. It is also difficult for Soporati to rise high in the Chantry, an extension of Tevinter's ingrained class system.

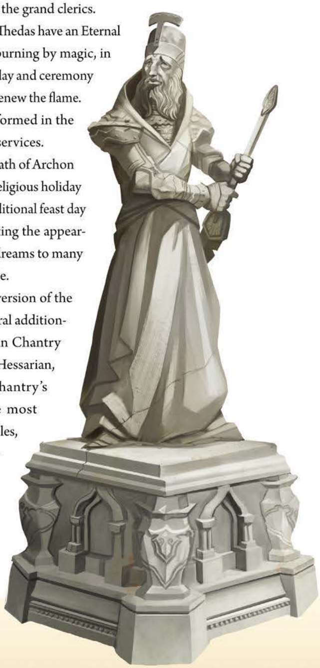
Both men and women serve in all levels of the Tevinter clergy, though the majority of Divines have been men. Nearly all priests in the Imperium marry, and work in the clergy tends to run in families, as with most professions in Tevinter.

The grand clerics and the Imperial Divine all occupy seats in the Magisterium, giving the Imperial Chantry more direct power over the state than the Orlesian Chantry. They elect a new Divine by simple majority, but in the event of a tie, the Archon casts the deciding vote. As with the Orlesian Chantry, Divines are traditionally elected from the ranks of the grand clerics.

Although all chantries in Thedas have an Eternal Flame which is lit and kept burning by magic, in the Imperium a religious holiday and ceremony mark the day a spell is cast to renew the flame. Indeed, magic is openly performed in the Imperial Chantry during all services.

The anniversary of the death of Archon Hessarian is also treated as a religious holiday in Tevinter, and there is an additional feast day for the "Visitations," celebrating the appearance of Blessed Andraste in dreams to many mages as she crossed the Fade.

The Imperial Chantry's version of the Chant of Light contains several additional Canticles that the Orlesian Chantry does not recognize. Archon Hessarian, in essence the Imperial Chantry's founder, is considered the most important of Andraste's disciples, and is treated with considerably more reverence in the Imperium than elsewhere in Thedas.



Archon Hessarian

The Orlesian Empire sacks the city of Denerim, claiming victory in Ferelden and driving King Brandel into hiding.

8:44 BLESSED

THE STONE

The dwarves do not believe in a supreme being or pantheon of gods. They instead practice a form of living ancestor worship by way of naming Paragons, while also maintaining a close connection to "the Stone" that surrounds them.

Most dwarves live their whole lives in the Stone. They forge their home from her. They are protected by her. They claim to actually come from her, even calling themselves the Stone's children.

When the dwarves die, they say they return to the Stone. While those above ground may burn their dead or send them out to sea, deceased dwarves are buried. Paragons and nobility are typically interred within ornate crypts, while the remains of common dwarves are encased within stone cairns. Failing that, they are buried in the dirt, though this is never ideal.

A dwarf who has achieved much—a great warrior, renowned craftsman, or especially a Paragon—is said to strengthen the Stone, while those who have shamed their clans are said to weaken her.

A casteless or disgraced dwarf may be outright rejected by her.

PARAGONS KNOWN & LESSER KNOWN

The criteria the dwarves use to name a Paragon never cease to fascinate me. While a relatively rare distinction, it seems almost any achievement of significance warrants the title. Some Paragons are the victors of great battles. Others write books or songs. The only common thread is an act that betters or sustains the dwarven way of life in some notable fashion.

Aeducan is among the oldest and perhaps most famous Paragons. Not to be confused with his descendent, King Endrin Aeducan, this prior Aeducan was a humble member of the Warrior Caste whose brave leadership during the First Blight saved Orzammar. When other thaigs were lost, Aeducan claimed defeat—but his service made him a hero. History now remembers Aeducan as the quintessential Paragon.

Other Paragons have been more controversial. Caridin, a master smith, created the powerful golems who helped the dwarves immeasurably in their battles with the darkspawn. Caridin then disappeared amid much speculation, taking the secret of his craft with him.

There is also Astyth the Grey, a Paragon of the Warrior Caste. She was famous for her skills in unarmed combat and cut out her own tongue to focus on the art without distraction. An order of female dwarven warriors known as the Silent Sisters persists; they remove their tongues in her honor.

But these are the most well known of the dwarven Paragons. Others have earned the rank over the ages for far less noble pursuits. I've found references to Paragons who made their names writing particularly good rhymes or brewing stronger ales.

Then there's the Paragon named Varen, who separated from his legion and lost his way in the Deep Roads. Varen nearly starved to death before breaking down and eating a nug, believed at the time as appetizing to dwarves as a rat. Devouring the creature not only saved his life but opened his palate to a new world of flavor. When they finally found him, Varen was fatter than ever and raving about the miraculous subtleties of nug flesh. The creatures are now considered a dwarven delicacy.

—From Stone Halls of the Dwarves, *by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar*

Giant statues tower over the caverns of Orzammar, imposing symbols of a dwarven Paragon's godlike status.

Any dead dwarf returned to the Stone is said to become a guiding spirit who cares for his descendants for eternity. However, the Stone is said to reject the worst transgressors. Their spirits are left to wander remote caverns as rock wraiths. These creatures appear often in dwarven children's stories, where they abduct lost miners and cause cave-ins, scaring young dwarves into good behavior.

The Fereldan nobility continue a guerrilla war against the occupying Orlesians, led by Brandel's daughter Moira, the "Rebel Queen."

PARAGONS

Paragon is the title given to the "living ancestors," dwarves recognized as so important, they are worthy of reverence as ancestors in their own lifetime. In traditional dwarven society, it is a rank bestowed only upon the greatest warriors, artisans, and smiths. Any house that has a Paragon relative is elevated to noble status.

The vote of a Paragon carries a great deal of weight in the dwarven Assembly, even though the title doesn't grant official power. Orzammar honors Paragons with statues in the Hall of Heroes, revering them long after death.

In Kal-Sharok, Paragon Elect is the highest elected government office. Kal-Sharok was isolated in the First Blight, and no longer recognizes a hereditary dwarven king. The practice of nominating Paragons evolved from recognition of past deeds into recognition of promised deeds. In Kal-Sharok, the likenesses of Paragons are not rendered as giant statues, but instead honored posthumously with carvings that subtly span vast lengths of the Deep Roads.

THE SOUL CANTO

A traveler asked the Ashkaari:
What was your vision of our purpose?

The Great Ashkaari replied: *I'll tell you a story.*

A vast granite statue stands on an island, holding back the sea.

The heavens crown its brow. It sees to the edge of the world.

The sea drowns its feet with every tide.

The heavens turn overhead, light and dark. The tide rises to devour the earth, and falls back.

The sun and the stars fall to the sea one by one in their turn, only to rise again.

The tide rises, the tide falls, but the sea is changeless.

Struggle is an illusion. There is nothing to struggle against.

The deception flows deeper. The statue resists the ebb and flow of the sea,

And is whittled away by each wave.

It protests the setting sun, and its face is burned looking upon it. It does not know itself.

Stubbornly, it resists wisdom, and is transformed.

If you love purpose, fall into the tide. Let it carry you.

Do not fear the dark. The sun and the stars will return to guide you.

You have seen the greatest kings build monuments to their glory

Only to have them crumble and fade.

How much greater is the world than their glory?

The purpose of the world renews itself with each season. Each change only marks

A part of the greater whole.

The sea and sky themselves:

Nothing special. Only pieces.

—*Tome of Koslun, the Soul Canto*

THE QUN

There was a time when the kossith race prayed to animist gods. They were wild then, devoted to a chaos that kept them from greatness. Then came Ashkaari Koslun, a great thinker whose teachings molded the kossith into the godless, disciplined Qunari.

Their guide now is the Qun, a philosophical text Koslun penned. At the book's heart are two concepts:

Mastery (*issqun*): "To know something is to understand it, to understand why it is, what it is, as well as what it is not. To know something is to possess the power to master it, and only in the lack of knowing lies weakness."

Balance (*aqun*): "To exist without balance is to fall, to break, to yield. Only with balance can true stillness be achieved. When one is still, one is free to listen and know. In knowing, become strong. With strength, become steel. And as steel, endure."

Any discussion of the Qun as a philosophy must extend to Qunari society as a whole, for the two are intrinsically linked. The Qun dictates all aspects of Qunari life. Strict adherence to its teachings is put before any concept of individual freedom.

Because of this, the Qun does not allow for the existence of religions. When the Qun became law, the temples kossith built to honor their animist gods were destroyed, and their priests were reeducated or driven into exile.

Any worship of a god or gods, such as the Maker, is forbidden and is stopped with violence if necessary.

For those who believe in the Qun, the lack of individual freedoms does not matter. They find comfort and stability in the order of it all. But for those who value freedom over the betterment of society, living under the Qun can be nothing short of unbearable.

Koslun is said to have come to his philosophy while searching for a society without hopelessness or despair. He wandered far, discovering no such place existed. He found groups of people happy and free, but always at the expense of others. Disappointed, Koslun exiled himself for a time in the desert.

Emperor Reville, fearing the court turning favor toward rival Grand Duke Gratien, has Gratien, his wife, three grown children, and all eight grandchildren murdered. The youngest, Camille, is only eight months old.

8:47 BLESSED

Emperor Reville dies after spending more than a year locked in his room, fearing retribution for his assassination of the Gratien family.

8:51 BLESSED

There, after encountering a massive swarm of locusts, he had an epiphany. He went on to pen many poetic lessons on how to build a new society that he believed would benefit all.

CULTURE

Every Qunari has a role under the Qun, and Qunari are raised to play the role expected of them. They may become warriors, bringing the laws of the Qun to the bas by force. Others may research ways to better society. Still others will raise the Qun's children.

"The Qunari view their whole society as a single creature," the seer of Kont-aar once wrote, "a living entity whose health and well-being are the responsibility of all."

A Qunari's role comes before even a name. They are known by what they do. A soldier with the rank of sten takes the name Sten. A mage, or saarebas, is named Saarebas. If a role changes, so does the name.

The Qunari language, called Qunlat, is steeped in metaphor and assigns multiple meanings to words. The word for "mind" also means "worker." The word for "body" also means "army." As far as the Qunari are concerned, a symbol and its signifier are the same thing. Because of this, artists are part of the priesthood. Their role is considered to be one of research, discovering things that were not already apparent, rather than making things new.

There is no real currency in Qunari society. "Merchants" in Qunari cities have the job of making sure goods are distributed appropriately. While Qunari don't buy and sell things among one another, they will trade with the rest of Thedas in a limited manner. To the Qunari, this trade is less a way to obtain goods as an opportunity to learn more about those who do not yet accept the Qun as law.

THE TRIUMVIRATE

Qunari leadership has three heads, together known as the Salasari:

Arigena: Head of worker Qunari. She is responsible for nurturing Qunari society and maintaining health in the community.

Ariqun: Head of the Qunari priesthood. He or she is responsible for ensuring the Qun is taught and pushing the progress of science.

Arishok: Head of the Qunari military. He is responsible for the protection and safety of society, as well as its expansion. The military is also responsible for dealing with foreigners, making the Arishok the nominal head of state. Because of this, outsiders may mistake him for a king.

SAAREBAS: THE QUN'S ANSWER TO MAGIC

According to the Qun, some things are too dangerous to know. With their focus on absolute order, magic falls into this category. The Qunari believe they can never control magic. In turn, they both fear and respect it.

When Qunari show themselves to be capable of magic, the Qun demands they be kept under rigid control. Their methods, which can include leashes and sewing mouths shut, are undoubtedly severe.

Childhood

There are no family units in Qunari society. They do not marry or even choose their own partners. Qunari do not know to whom they are related. A father's involvement ends at conception. A mother's ends at birth. A Qunari's "family" are his or her peers, called brothers or sisters.

A powerful class of female priestesses called Tamassrans arranges and approves conception. They are also charged with raising children from birth. The Tamassrans determine who may have children and see these children are properly taught the way of the Qun, educating them and evaluating their strengths.

Qunari are officially assigned their roles when they are twelve years old. The Tamassrans use tests—oral or physical, rather than written—to determine where a young Qunari will be most useful. Because they raise the society's children, the Tamassrans wield great influence.

Gender Roles

The Qunari believe that both men and women are capable of leadership. However, Qunari deem one gender or the other better at certain roles in their society. No matter how much aptitude a male shows for management, he will never be as good at it as a female. Therefore, they would consider it inefficient to put him in such a role when a woman would be better.

Most roles are gender specific. But the odd, very rare exception is made. A male Qunari will farm, if he must, just as a female Qunari will fight.

There are fields like philosophy or sciences that make ample use of both genders, but even then, there is a division by discipline. Men do one sort of research and women do another. The Ben-Hassrath count both genders among its ranks, but they're also separated by specialization.

There is almost no role in Qunari society occupied by both genders doing exactly the same task.

The Qunari retake Seheron. Tevinter is left to war with them on its own. Several attempts by the Qunari to land on the continent and directly attack Tevinter fail.

8:55 BLESSED

Aurelian Pentaghast attempts to assume the Nevarran throne before it is revealed he is not a Pentaghast. The disgraced Aurelian joins the dwarven Legion of the Dead, the only human ever to do so.

8:60 BLESSED

The Arishok

Ben-Hassrath: The Secret Police

The Ben-Hassrath are the secret police in Qunari society who enforce the law of the Qun. They will also venture outside Qunari society to perform covert missions in foreign lands, hunting Tal-Vashoth and other enemies of the Qun, sometimes acting as spies.

While the Qunari accept the Ben-Hassrath as a fact of life, other races vilify the Qun's secret police. These notorious hammers of Qun justice do not usually kill their prisoners. To do so is seen as a waste, as all people have value. Instead of death, prisoners are put to work in labor camps and taught the way of the Qun. They are fed well and given simple, clean cells.

The Ben-Hassrath are responsible for "reeducation" and the assimilation of conquered peoples.

"Some of my platoon resisted the indoctrination, refusing even to pretend," an unnamed Imperium soldier, captured by the Ben-Hassrath, once wrote in recovered memoirs. "The Ben-Hassrath see rebellion and discontent as an illness that can be cured, and they took these men to the viddathlok, temples dedicated to healing and recovery. I do not know what happened there. The men who returned were changed in profound ways. Others, we never saw again. I can only assume the 'cure' did not take."

TAL-VASHOTH

The Tal-Vashoth are those who have lived under the Qun and rejected it. This rebellion against its principles makes Tal-Vashoth traitors in the eyes of the Qunari. Tal-Vashoth frequently clash with Qunari, but they are not large enough in number to be a formidable threat to the Qun. Still, they are seen as a problem, and their ranks are consistently targeted by the Ben-Hassrath.

Tal-Vashoth usually stick together. Most are kossith. Since many in Thedas see kossith and think "Qunari," the Tal-Vashoth are often forced into a life of banditry and mercenary work, unaccepted and unable to find safer work.

Tal-Vashoth means "the true gray ones." It is a name they give themselves.

A war between Nevarra and Orlais over control of the western hills around Perendale results in Nevarran victory.

8:70 BLESSED

Queen Moira is assassinated. Orlesian forces leverage her death to tighten their grip on Ferelden. Her son Maric escapes.

8:96 BLESSED

chapter six

THE FADE

Endrin Aeducan takes the throne in Orzammar.

8:96 BLESSED

The Fereldan rebels, led by the young King Maric, take the isolated port town of Gwaren, their first major victory since the death of Queen Moira.

8:98 BLESSED

THE FADE IS AN OTHERWORLDLY REALM OF GREAT POWER AND MYSTERY, a wellspring of magic, and, to some, the source of creation. They say you enter this kingdom of spirits when you sleep, as well as when you die, and that a corruption at its heart set in motion the Blight.

The Fade is home to a great many spirits—some evil, some benevolent. These single-minded creatures are ceaselessly curious about the complexities of a sleeper's mind and life beyond the Fade. The spirits shape their world to cater to the unconscious thoughts of the living, creating what the living call dreams.

It is possible to enter the Fade through one's mind and remain lucid. This is usually done with magic bolstered by ingesting lyrium. Only those who use lyrium to enter the Fade remain able to separate their dreams from reality.

Entering the Fade in one's mind while lucid is a considerable risk. When the souls of the dreaming are harmed or killed in the Fade, they return immediately to their sleeping bodies, waking before the moment of death. But the magic that keeps lucid minds in the Fade also prevents them from returning to their bodies at that moment of death, meaning they die in both realms.

When you enter the Fade, you do so in mind only. It is nearly impossible for any person to physically set foot there. Only a group of ancient Tevinter magisters was famously able to accomplish the feat, and only by invoking blood magic of unimaginable power. The act was said to spur the Blight, and has not since been achieved.

The souls of the dreaming wander the Fade.

House Tethras is exiled to the surface for denying the Voice of the Ancestors and willfully manipulating the sacred Provings.

At the Battle of West Hill, the Fereldan army is devastated by Orlesian forces. Survivors retreat to Gwaren. Maric is presumed dead.

GEOGRAPHY & TRAVEL WITHIN THE FADE

Accounts of the Fade in its raw form describe a twisted, frightening world of dark rock and raw lyrium where it is always night. An ominous ribbon of light stretches across the sky and a shadowy metropolis known as the Black City looms, always in the distance.

When shaped by dreams, the Fade may appear as something else entirely: at times strikingly similar to the waking world, mimicking reality. What dreamers and lucid visitors alike see is a skewed version of reality, built to the scale of the memories attached to real places. Spirits shape these illusions for their own purposes, often focusing on a key emotion they find especially intriguing. It can seem to the living that some spirits simply enjoy toying with them.

The Fade is separated into smaller realms reigned over by the most influential spirits. There are realms of fear, where dreamers may face horrors. There are realms of pain, where torturous dungeons or a moment of loss may surface. It is impossible to

Believed hunted to extinction, dragons emerge first in Antiva, then devastate rural Orlais and Nevarra. Repeated attempts to cull their numbers end in heavy casualties.

8:99 BLESSED

With the aid of the Legion of the Dead, King Maric emerges from the Deep Roads under Gwaren. At the Battle of River Dane, Fereldan rebels commanded by Loghain Mac Tir turn the tide against their Orlesian occupiers.

8:99 BLESSED

The Fade is often a terrifying place.

travel between these realms unless the visitor is lucid. Even then, the destination may be difficult to control.

If one is to travel in the Fade by any means other than by foot, it must be with the aid of a spirit. Even the lowliest wisp possesses enough power to shape the Fade to the traveler's needs. Travelers, and especially mages, must be cautious, however. If a spirit figures out that they are not sleeping, it will attempt to use them to cross over into the real world, possessing the traveler's physical body. A mage is not powerless in the Fade, as spells do work to a degree. But they often do not behave as expected, as natural laws do not apply.

Visitors to the Fade may encounter dreamers. It is also possible for dreamers to interact with other dreamers in the same realm, but they will often not remember such contact when they wake. For the lucid, attempting to communicate with dreamers can prove difficult, as they are preoccupied by whatever dreams the spirits have created for them.

With so many dreamers, it can be difficult to locate a particular one. Even if communication is established, there is also no guarantee that the dreamer will remember what is said when they wake; dreams are readily forgotten, after all.

The Dragon Age begins. It is predicted to be an age of violence and upheaval.

8:99 BLESSED

DRAGON AGE

King Maric succeeds in driving out the Orlesian occupying force. He kills the usurper king Meghren in a duel at Fort Drakon.

9:00 DRAGON

"THE FADE IS IN CONSTANT FLUX."

The study of the Fade is as old as humankind. For so long as men have dreamed, we have walked its twisting paths, sometimes catching a glimpse of the city at its heart. Always as close as our own thoughts, but impossibly separated from our world.

The Tevinter Imperium once spent vast fortunes of gold, lyrium, and human slaves in an effort to map the terrain of the Fade, an ultimately futile endeavor. Although portions of it belong to powerful spirits, all of the Fade is in constant flux. The Imperium succeeded in finding the disparate and ever-shifting realms of a dozen demon lords, as well as cataloging a few hundred types of spirits, before they were forced to abandon the project.

The relationship of dreamers to the Fade is complex. Even when entering the Fade through the use of lyrium, mortals are not able to control or affect it. The spirits who dwell there, however, can, and as the Chantry teaches us, the great flaw of the spirits is that they have neither imagination nor ambition. They create what they see through their sleeping visitors, building elaborate copies of our cities, people, and events, which, like the reflections in a mirror, ultimately lack context or life of their own. Even the most powerful demons merely plagiarize the worst thoughts and fears of mortals, and build their realms with no other ambition than to taste life.

—*From* Tranquility and the Role of the Fade in Human Culture, *by First Enchanter Josephus*

A spirit shapes its realm by mimicking the pieces of life it sees through the eyes of dreamers.

SPIRITS & DEMONS

Spirits are creatures native to the Fade. These powerful beings take the form of virtues, or, in the case of demons, sins. What seems so strange, and often frightening, to a visitor is commonplace to these Fade dwellers. Spirits, in turn, are mystified by the waking world.

Fade spirits shift the Fade's appearance, dimensions, and nearly every sensory aspect of the realm at their leisure. When spirits encounter a visitor, most can't help but mine the visitor's mind for their thoughts and memories, and may use these to shape the visitor's perceptions and trick them into thinking their dreams are reality.

Spirits embody and latch onto singular purposes. These purposes can be perceived as good, such as spirits of faith or valor. Demons embody the darker side of the living, and will shape the Fade to reflect this. They often take on horrific forms representing everything from pride or rage to desire incarnate. Like good spirits, they may also possess the living or dead.

A spirit with a purpose does its all to fulfill that purpose. A hunger demon, for instance, will do anything within its power to feed.

The Fade's geography varies from realm to realm, but natural laws are mimicked.

"I DRIFTED THROUGH FROZEN MOMENTS."

I once studied the Fade as a scholar, dissecting it, as a child might a rat or a frog. I was young and craved the power conquering the Fade could bring. I tried in vain to chart its paths, and when that failed, I attempted to secure them. In my arrogance, I struggled against the Fade's very nature. How does one pin down a dream? How can one control a thought so that it might travel always the same course from conception to completion?

Only when I let go of my desires and humbled myself was the Fade opened to me. The spirits came and took it upon themselves to be my guides, my lanterns in the darkness. At their command, the paths grew still, and I could walk them again and again. I was shown vast oceans, containing not water, but memories, drawn from the minds of dreamers. I drifted through frozen moments, like paintings, perfect in each detail. As I explored this impossible realm, the spirits kept darker things at bay. I came to trust them, even love them, and I saw my own love reflected in them.

To know the Fade, one cannot seek to master it. The Fade is the master, the teacher. We are merely apprentices.

—Writings of Magister Callistus of Taraevyn, known to some as "Callistus the Fade-Touched"

I found myself on a plateau of swirling smoke and mist. I could not see my feet, or perhaps I had no feet in that place. Each step was treacherous. I had to believe there was a ground. If I didn't, there wouldn't be, and I would fall into nothingness. I was protected only by my will and my magic.

The demon they made me face took the shape of a great cat. As we battled, it spoke in my mind. It told me that I would eventually stumble, and then it would pounce. The demon talked to me of the templars beyond the Veil, standing over my paralyzed body, their swords pointed at my heart, waiting for the moment of my failure. All it would take was a splinter of fear, a seed of doubt, and I would be unmade. The demon would devour my mind, and the templars would destroy what was left of me.

This was my Harrowing. They force this upon all mages and call it good. But it is neither good nor right. It is evil and unjust.

—From a partially destroyed journal bearing no name, found in a Kinloch Hold cistern

The Fade? I've got one word for you: "unnatural." See, we dwarves sleep like the Stone. No dreams. But find enough lyrium or blood and you can even send a dwarf across the Veil. Trust me when I say we don't like it.

I've followed the Hero of Ferelden into the deepest pits of Thedas. I'd do it all over again before you can say, "I'll pay you in ale." But cross the Veil again? That'll give me second thoughts.

—Oghren, dwarf

Cailan, crown prince of Ferelden, is born to Maric and Queen Rowan.

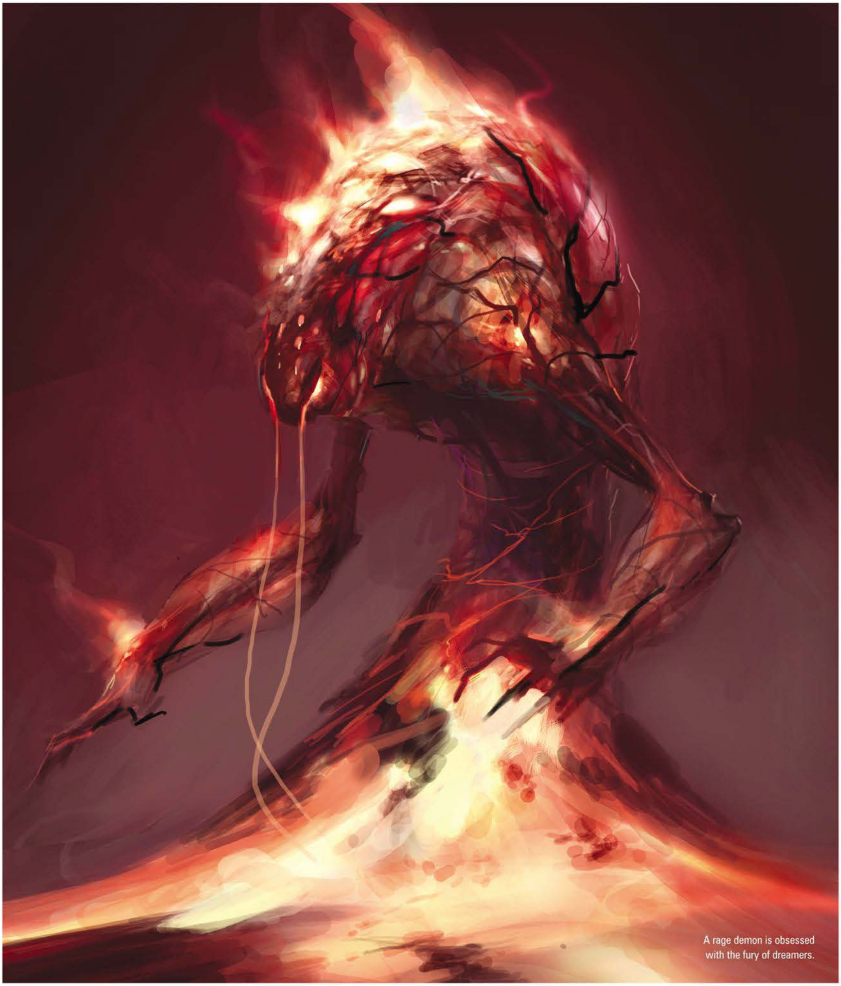
9:5 DRAGON

Celene, future Orlesian empress, is born.

9:6 DRAGON

Queen Rowan of Ferelden dies.

9:8 DRAGON



A rage demon is obsessed with the fury of dreamers.

King Maric allows the Grey Wardens to return to Ferelden after two ages of exile for their failed coup attempt.

9:10 DRAGON

A young female smith named Branka is made Paragon for her invention of smokeless coal.

9:10 DRAGON

Mages entering the Fade on a regular basis generally become comfortable enough to reliably find and communicate with other visitors.

Alistair, a future hero of the Fifth Blight, is born in Ferelden.

9:10 DRAGON

Kal-Sharok is rediscovered in the Hunterhorn Mountains.

9:12 DRAGON

There is a great hierarchy of spirits, ranging from those who rule the dream realms to minor spirits that have little influence over the ether. Some spirits, like wisps, are often too simple and impressionable to be good or evil. They wander aimlessly until driven into action by a master with a purpose to give them. Mages may use wisps to help guide them through the Fade.

As fascinating as the waking world is to a spirit, it can also be very confusing, sometimes even terrifying. Spirits that wander across the boundary known as the Veil are unpredictable and often extremely dangerous.

THE VEIL

The Veil is what separates the Fade from the waking world. It may be weakened in places where great death lingers or through the use of magic.

In these weak spots, spirits gain entry to the living world. Most weaker spirits that cross the Veil will mindlessly seek to possess any sign of life they encounter. In the absence of life, they may possess the dead. The Veil is particularly thin at night, when most people sleep and spirits are most active.

On extremely rare occasions, the Veil may tear. This may be done with powerful magic, or come about after the slaughter of a great many people in a short period.

"THE VEIL IS AN IDEA."

I detest this notion that the Veil is some manner of invisible "curtain" that separates the world of the living from the world of the spirits (whether it be called the Fade or the Beyond is a matter of racial politics I refuse to indulge in at the moment). There is no "this side" and "that side" when it comes to the Veil. One cannot think of it as a physical thing or a barrier or even a "shimmering wall of holy light" (thank you very much for that image, Your Perfection).

Think of the Veil, instead, as opening one's eyes.

Before you opened them, you saw our world as you see it now: static, solid, unchanging. Now that they are open, you see our world as the spirits see it: chaotic, ever changing, a realm where the imagined and the remembered have as much substance as that which is real—more, in fact. A spirit sees everything as defined by will and memory, and this is why they are so very lost when they cross the Veil. In our world, imagination has no substance. Objects exist independently of how we remember them or what emotions we associate with them. Mages alone possess the power to change the world with their minds, and perhaps this forms the nature of a demon's attraction to them—who can say?

Regardless, the act of passing through the Veil is much more about changing one's perceptions than a physical transition. The Veil is an idea, it is the act of transition itself, and it is only the fact that both living beings and spirits find the transition difficult that gives the Veil any credence as a physical barrier at all.

—*From* A Dissertation on the Fade as a Physical Manifestation, *by Mareno, senior enchanter of the Minrathous Circle of Magi, 6:55 Steel*

THE BLACK CITY

Standing at the center of the Fade, viewable from all points, is the Black City. This ominous shadow of once-golden towers is ever present, but forever out of reach.

In the shifting otherworld of the Fade, the only geographical absolute seems to be that all points are equidistant from the Black City.

The Chant teaches that the Black City was once the Golden City, the seat of the Maker when he ruled the Fade. The faithful believe the Maker abandoned his throne when humanity abandoned him.

The ancient Tevinter magisters said the Fade was the realm of their Old Gods, and the Golden City was the center of the deities' power. It was beautiful then, a metropolis of impossible majesty. It is written that the magisters heard the whispers of the gods from across the Veil. It was from them that the magisters first learned the art of magic. But the magisters wanted more. They used magic, fueled by blood, to physically step into the Fade and approach the Golden City. For their audacity, they were cast out as the first darkspawn, and the corrupted Golden City blackened.

What secrets hide behind the Black City's walls, no mortal could know. Even the most powerful demons keep their distance.

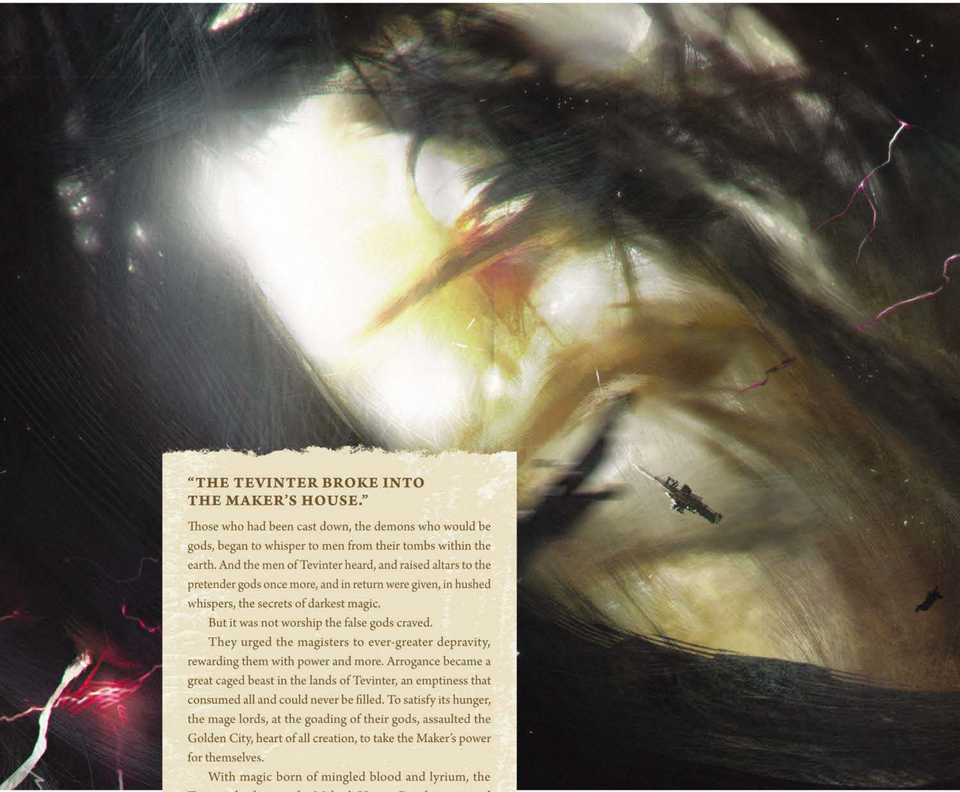
The Chantry teaches that when the Chant of Light spreads to all corners of the world and mankind is without sin, the Maker will return and restore the Black City.

Bownammar, the fortress of the Legion of the Dead, falls to the darkspawn.

9:13 DRAGON

Underneath Ferelden, the intelligent darkspawn known as the Architect attempts to unearth and kill the remaining Old Gods and taint the entire surface world. His efforts are thwarted by King Maric and a band of Wardens.

9:14 DRAGON



"THE TEVINTER BROKE INTO THE MAKER'S HOUSE."

Those who had been cast down, the demons who would be gods, began to whisper to men from their tombs within the earth. And the men of Tevinter heard, and raised altars to the pretender gods once more, and in return were given, in hushed whispers, the secrets of darkest magic.

But it was not worship the false gods craved.

They urged the magisters to ever-greater depravity, rewarding them with power and more. Arrogance became a great caged beast in the lands of Tevinter, an emptiness that consumed all and could never be filled. To satisfy its hunger, the mage lords, at the goading of their gods, assaulted the Golden City, heart of all creation, to take the Maker's power for themselves.

With magic born of mingled blood and lyrium, the Tevinter broke into the Maker's House. But the promised power did not await them there.

The moment they entered the city of the Maker, their sin poisoned it. What had been golden turned black, and violently they were flung from the world of dreams back into the waking world. Twisted and corrupted by their crime and their magic into monsters, they fled underground, unable to bear the light of day. The first darkspawn.

—*Threnodies 8:21–27, the Canticle of Transfigurations*

CULTURAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE FADE

Chantry

According to the Chantry, the Fade is a land of primeval matter from which the Maker formed the world and all living beings. When the living die, their souls enter the Fade, and if they are faithful, pass through to join the Maker at his side. The wicked and unfaithful, however, are stuck in the Fade, doomed to wander endlessly.

Empress Celene I ascends to the throne in Orlais.

9:20 DRAGON

Soon after Celene I assumes the Orlesian throne, Ferelden and Orlais officially make peace.

9:20 DRAGON

Elves

Old elven beliefs call it "the Beyond," a holy place once home to their gods. What little of elven lore has survived speaks of Fen'Harel, a trickster god who schemed to take the Beyond for himself, imprisoning his brethren in the Eternal City at its heart. The elves believe their gods remain trapped in the prison to this day, as Fen'Harel, the Dread Wolf, gleefully patrols the Beyond to feast upon the souls of the dead.

Dwarves

A dwarf entering the Fade is a rare thing. The underground dwellers do not dream, and ages of lyrium exposure have made them largely immune to its power. Because no dwarven souls are found in the Fade, the Chantry claims that the dwarves were not created by the Maker.

Qunari

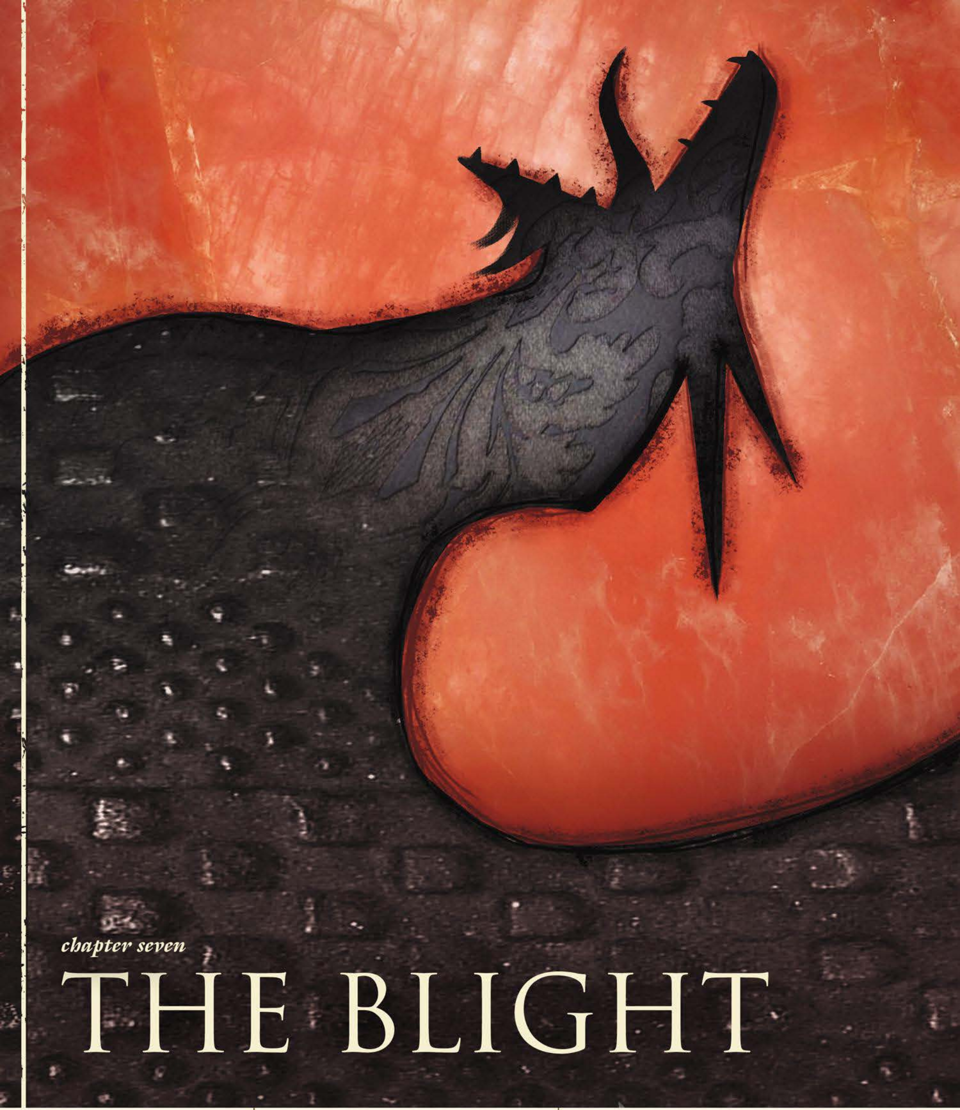
The Qunari believe the Fade is the Land of the Dead. Entering it in any fashion is strictly forbidden by the Qun, and the idea that a sleeping Qunari might ever enter such a realm is reprehensible. Qunari insist that they do not dream as others do. Since they are rarely encountered in the Fade, it can be hard to refute this claim.

Kirkwall Viscount Perrin Threnhold is overthrown by Knight-Commander Meredith and Marlowe Dumar is made the new viscount.

9:21 DRAGON

The Grand Cathedral is set upon by dragons during a ten-year gathering of Chantry faithful. A young Seeker named Cassandra Pentaghast foils what is revealed to be a conspiracy to kill Divine Beatrix III. She is named a hand of the Divine.

9:22 DRAGON



chapter seven

THE BLIGHT

King Maric is presumed dead at sea and his son Cailan is crowned king.

9:25 DRAGON

Cailan marries Anora Mac Tir, daughter of Teyrn Loghain Mac Tir.

9:25 DRAGON

UNDER THEDAS STIRS THE CONSTANT THREAT OF AN END TO ALL THINGS: THE BLIGHT. Twisted creatures called darkspawn surface in impossible numbers under the command of a blighted high dragon known as an Archdemon, launching an all-out war on anything that isn't tainted. Five times in history this has happened. Each time, the people of Thedas narrowly avoided destruction with the aid of the legendary Grey Wardens.

Why Blights happen is debated. The prevailing belief is that Archdemons are Tevinter Old Gods, trying to regain power after their home in the Fade was corrupted by the ancient nation's magisters. The Wardens believe that defeating the remaining Archdemons means stopping future Blights.

Recent evidence of darkspawn capable of speech and rational thought has complicated theories surrounding the Blight's purpose. Only a few fringe scholars argue the point, as the death and destruction a Blight brings tend to render the question of "why" irrelevant.

ANATOMY OF A BLIGHT

The Wardens teach that the catalyst of a Blight is the awakening of an Old God lurking somewhere down below. When the darkspawn find and wake one, the Old God is corrupted, creating an Archdemon.

As the darkspawn advance to the surface, the land around them is sucked of moisture, bringing a wasting force that blackens the earth and withers plants to dust. The sky fills with rolling black clouds that block the sun. Where the darkspawn go, disease and rot follow. The degenerative diseases born of the taint persist and spread long after a Blight is over.

With the exception of the Fifth Blight, which started and stopped in Ferelden, Blights have historically brought all civilized races to the edge of destruction before the Wardens managed to destroy the Archdemon.

ARCHDEMON

Few people have ever seen an Archdemon. What little is known about them comes from the Wardens. They say an Archdemon is a fearsome creature with gnarled teeth, rotting purple scales, and bent wings. Despite its monstrous appearance, the dragon is believed to be quite intelligent.

The call of an Archdemon can be heard by darkspawn over great distances. Wardens may hear it too, one clear signal that a Blight is looming. What the call is exactly has proven hard to define. In a Warden's ears, it sounds like strange music, an intoxicating melody that grows louder and more appealing as corruption advances. Darkspawn are consumed by its draw and can think of nothing else but uncovering its source.

Paragon Branka ventures into the Deep Roads in search of Caridin's Anvil of the Void.

The Fifth Blight begins in the Korcari Wilds of Ferelden after the Architect attempts to make a disciple of the Old God Urthemiel.

9:28 DRAGON

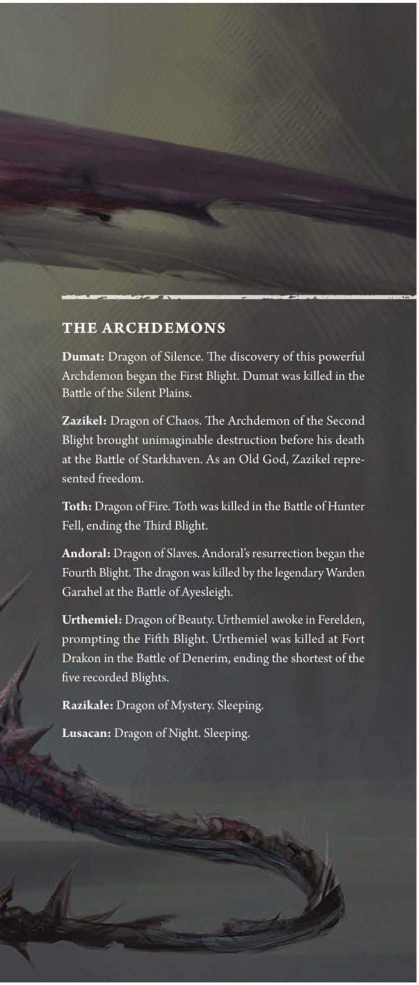
9:30 DRAGON

A senior Fereldan Warden named Duncan recruits Alistair and others to put down the impending Blight. Among his recruits is the future Hero of Ferelden.

9:30 DRAGON

Endrin Aeducan dies of grief over the loss of his oldest and youngest children, leaving only middle child Bhelen to inherit the throne. A conflict breaks out in Orzammar over succession when Lord Pyral Harrowmont accuses Bhelen of fratricide.

9:30 DRAGON



THE ARCHDEMONS

Dumat: Dragon of Silence. The discovery of this powerful Archdemon began the First Blight. Dumat was killed in the Battle of the Silent Plains.

Zazikel: Dragon of Chaos. The Archdemon of the Second Blight brought unimaginable destruction before his death at the Battle of Starkhaven. As an Old God, Zazikel represented freedom.

Toth: Dragon of Fire. Toth was killed in the Battle of Hunter Fell, ending the Third Blight.

Andoral: Dragon of Slaves. Andoral's resurrection began the Fourth Blight. The dragon was killed by the legendary Warden Garahel at the Battle of Ayesleigh.

Urthemiel: Dragon of Beauty. Urthemiel awoke in Ferelden, prompting the Fifth Blight. Urthemiel was killed at Fort Drakon in the Battle of Denerim, ending the shortest of the five recorded Blights.

Razikale: Dragon of Mystery. Sleeping.

Lusacan: Dragon of Night. Sleeping.

A FINE TIME TO CLOSE A BORDER

The news is dire. There are rumors that our Warden brothers and sisters in Ferelden have all perished. Without the Grey Wardens, the Blight will take Ferelden. Then it will undoubtedly spread. It will go north to Nevarra and the Marches. It will come west to Orlais. At the head will be an Archdemon, and in its wake will come thousands upon thousands of darkspawn. We must be ready to stare squarely into the eyes of oblivion.

Many of you have asked why we remain here when such threats are mounting in the east. The problem, you see, is not a new one for us. Politics. To say Ferelden and Orlais have been at odds is an understatement. These two are like dogs and cats. We Wardens are Orlesian by address only, but that does not seem to matter to Ferelden's leaders.

Word is that the king of Ferelden is dead. And his successor, Loghain Mac Tir, decrees that no Warden set foot in the country. Mac Tir, a national hero who helped expel invading Orlesian forces from Ferelden, seems to have it out for our Order too. Maybe he doubts our abilities. Maybe he is more foolish than the history books make him out to be.

This is why we must wait, even as Ferelden willingly welcomes its fate.

—An address by Warden-Constable Blackwall of Val Chevin to his recruits, 9:30 Dragon

DARKSPAWN

The darkspawn are twisted shadows of humans, elves, and other common races. They normally remain below the surface, free to reign over expansive stretches of the long-abandoned dwarven Deep Roads. Great numbers of darkspawn lurk in the deepest caverns and tunnels.

Darkspawn are normally not very organized. Though their constant presence in the Deep Roads between Blights has pushed the dwarves to edge of extinction, it is only under the leadership of an Archdemon that the darkspawn pose any significant threat above ground. Unified, a darkspawn army is capable of unfathomable devastation.

Origins

The Chantry teaches that the first darkspawn came from what's known as the "second sin." They were the Tevinter magisters who touched the Golden City. Upon stepping into the godly realm, the magisters turned it black. Their sin created the taint and they were transformed into the first darkspawn. As they carried the taint to others, more darkspawn were created.

The Battle of Ostagar is lost when Loghain quits the field, leaving the assembled Wardens trapped behind darkspawn lines. The Wardens, with the exception of Alistair and the future Hero of Ferelden, are slaughtered.

9:30 DRAGON

The Hawke family flees the destruction of Lothering and travels to Kirkwall, where they begin indentured servitude in order to obtain entry to the city.

9:30 DRAGON

Broodmothers are horrific creatures capable of giving birth to dozens of darkspawn in a single litter.

When a person is tainted, their body and mind waste away until they are little more than a snarling ghoul. Darkspawn are born to broodmothers: females of a given race ravaged and tainted by the darkspawn to become horrid creatures. A broodmother will birth thousands of darkspawn in her lifetime, all variants of her former race. Elven broodmothers give birth to shrieks. Dwarven broodmothers spawn genlocks. Humans birth hurlocks and kossith birth ogres.

A bloated broodmother will give birth to a large litter at once, between twenty and fifty children. They emerge from her giant womb as toddlers, often already able to walk, and develop rapidly during their first few weeks on their own. Young darkspawn are expected to compete with each other to survive. They will try to kill each other, perhaps a natural instinct. This serves to thin out the weaker offspring.

Occasionally one young darkspawn will be so much more powerful than the rest that it kills the entire brood. This darkspawn is called an alpha. They are generally taller, stronger, or much more intelligent than the rest of their kind. Alphas will inevitably take command of weaker darkspawn.

Some darkspawn, including a few alphas, may prove adept at magic. These darkspawn, dubbed by the Wardens as emissaries, tend to only show themselves on the surface during Blights. The spells they cast are rooted in a strange form of blood magic.

Intellect

While it is true that most darkspawn do not speak beyond grunts and hisses, and subsist in unfathomably filthy, desperate conditions, it would be wrong to call them stupid. The darkspawn possess a cunning that must not be discounted. They are skilled on the battlefield, capable of sophisticated tactics. They can build structures and craft powerful, albeit ugly, weapons and armor. Genlocks are particularly good at construction, a remnant of their dwarven origins.

Though common darkspawn don't speak a language by any surface standards, they are able to understand each other. A cry of alarm at the sight of an intruder is always understood.

When there isn't an Archdemon to direct the darkspawn, the chain of command breaks down. Alphas become tyrants, splitting the horde amongst themselves and fighting for dominance.

A united Ferelden, led by the Hero of Ferelden, slays Urthemiel at the Battle of Denerim, ending the Fifth Blight.

9:31 DRAGON

The Architect frees an intelligent broodmother called the Mother from the call of the Old Gods. She goes insane and attempts to undo his work.

9:31 DRAGON

A new breed of talking darkspawn emerge. Some pledge allegiance to the Mother. Others follow the Architect.

9:31 DRAGON

When darkspawn spill from below the earth en masse, the subsequent Blight threatens the very existence of civilized Thedas.

The Mother is slain by the Hero of Ferelden, now the nation's Warden-Commander.

9:31 DRAGON

The dwarves of Orzammar reclaim Kal'Hirol thaig.

9:31 DRAGON

Amgarrak is overrun by twisted creatures known as Harvesters after failed attempts to re-create Caridin's golem research.

9:31 DRAGON

Their lack of cohesion is what keeps them from threatening anyone but those who venture close enough to turn their attention away from the infighting.

There are rare examples of hyperintelligent darkspawn, capable of advanced thought and speech rivaling any human, elf, or dwarf.

One such darkspawn was the Architect, who was able to ignore the call of the Old Gods, lead other darkspawn toward a common cause, and even ponder the purpose of his twisted race. He once tried and failed to infect all Thedas with the taint in the hope of finding a middle ground with the darkspawn. It was his vain hope that peace could exist between the two. When this failed, the Architect sought a fruitless bid to end future Blights through the harvesting of Grey Warden blood. He hoped that administering it to all darkspawn would sever their connection to any remaining Archdemons.

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE CORRUPTED

The corruption is taking hold now. What doesn't hurt is numb. Head's all foggy, but the scientist in me can't help but describe what this feels like.

My body is breaking down. The fingernails were the first to go. I started to itch all over, and when I scratched, they peeled back. Clumps of hair fell away. Then clumps of flesh.

I hear a song in my head. It's deafening. The most beautiful thing I've ever heard. But I don't hear it with my ears. It's in my brain. A blissful sound. This must be the call for which the darkspawn yearn, what causes them to dig so feverishly.

I'd still rather die. Suppose that's something.

—Missive found in the Deep Roads, signed only "Warden Pierse"

Hurlocks are a common form of darkspawn.

Another intelligent darkspawn is the ancient Corypheus, one of the most powerful and wise ever encountered. He is believed to be one of the ancient magisters who entered and corrupted the Golden City. The Wardens sealed him away in a prison using blood magic. In the Dragon Age, he was freed by the Champion of Kirkwall and struck down.

GREY WARDENS

When the First Blight hit, it lasted more than one hundred years. Many thought it to be the end of days. Entire generations lived and died warring with the darkspawn.

When the Blight was at its most bleak, the Grey Wardens were born. The Order was founded at Fortress Weisshaupt in the Anderfels. The humans, elves, and dwarves were all experienced darkspawn killers who abandoned any flags and titles to end the Blight. In order to do this, they took extreme measures; drinking the blood of the darkspawn allowed them to sense their foes'

A Qunari dreadnought is shipwrecked near Kirkwall, stranding their Arishok and hundreds of soldiers in the city. They refuse to leave until they recover the stolen Tome of Koslun.

9:31 DRAGON

The eldest Hawke, released from servitude, helps fund an expedition into the Deep Roads with dwarven brothers Bartrand and Varric Tethras.

9:31 DRAGON

presence and hear the call of the Archdemon. Mounting great flying griffons as steeds, the Wardens turned the tide. They pushed into the heart of the darkspawn front and slew the Archdemon, an act thought impossible.

The victory solidified the Order as protectors of Thedas. The Wardens have persisted for ages at the front of all five Blights, ever vigilant in the periods of peace in between.

RIGHT OF CONSCRIPTION

When Wardens venture out in search of promising recruits, they look among all races for the strongest fighters and quickest minds. What isn't essential is a willingness to join. According to old tithing rights solidified after the First Blight, the Wardens may conscript whomever they choose, from the lowliest elven peasant to the firstborn son of a king. If the recruit is under the authority of another body, that authority is nullified. The Wardens may even recruit someone sentenced to death.

This is not to say Wardens are all prisoners of the Order. To be a Warden is considered by many to be a great honor. Elves tend to be especially eager to volunteer. Unlike the vast majority of society, the Order views all races as equal.

Traditionally, the Wardens are allowed to recruit one member from each Circle of Magi. This mage is selected as a youth and becomes a Grey Warden for life. He or she serves the Wardens in the same way mages serve rulers and is given a place of great importance in the Order. Warden mages help facilitate the secretive ritual known as the Joining.

THE JOINING

All Warden recruits must undergo a dangerous, secret ritual called the Joining. It is a test of a recruit's constitution, as well as an acceptance of the Wardens' greatest gift and curse: the taint of the darkspawn.

The Joining requires darkspawn blood. Recruits are typically sent out under the watch of an older Warden to slay darkspawn and collect the blood. This is a test to see if the recruit has the courage and ability to fight darkspawn.

Once the blood is collected, the Wardens add a single drop of Archdemon blood and use magic to make it at least remotely possible to consume. Archdemon blood is among the rarest substances in all Thedas, and it makes the Joining all the more exclusive a ritual. Older Wardens carry a small amount of it with them at all times.

Normally, the taint within darkspawn blood can be lethal. Ingestion makes most ill. Adding Archdemon blood only intensifies the effect, rendering the mixture instantly lethal to most. A recruit who survives drinking the blood is considered worthy of the Order.

Should the recruit survive, he or she will forever share a deeper connection to the darkspawn, sensing them when they are near and, in a Blight, hearing the call of the Archdemon. This gives them a great advantage in combat with the darkspawn, but also dooms them to a horrible end.

Grey Wardens once mounted griffons in battle. The beasts died out some time after the Fourth Blight.

The Deep Roads Expedition at Kirkwall discovers an ancient thaig that predates the First Blight. Inside is lyrium that glows red. An idol made of the strange lyrium is recovered.

9:31 DRAGON

Hawke enters the Warden prison in the Vimmark Mountains and attempts to destroy Corypheus. History is vague on when exactly this occurs.

9:31—9:37 DRAGON

WARDEN HIERARCHY

First Warden
The official head of the Order lives at Weisshaupt. Since the extinction of griffons, communication has deteriorated between the First Warden and other Wardens scattered across Thedas. Because of this, the First Warden is now seen as more of a political leader or even a figurehead. Military command tends to fall to the ranking Warden-Commander in any given region.

High Constable
Until the loss of the griffons, the High Constable was the Wardens' aerial commander and second in command to the First Warden. In recent years, the High Constable has become the public face of Warden leadership in Weisshaupt, leading recruitment in the Anderfels and acting as ambassador to the nation's high king.

Chamberlain of the Grey
The senior archivist of the Warden Order at Weisshaupt, the Chamberlain of the Grey is also responsible for maintaining correspondence among the Warden-Commanders at the behest of the First Warden. The Chamberlain technically outranks all Warden-Commanders, though he or she would likely be lost leading an army.

Warden-Commander
Formally called Commander of the Grey, a Warden-Commander is the leader of the Order in any one region of Thedas. Diminishing lines of communication to Weisshaupt means most Warden-Commanders answer to no one and run their branch of the Order as they see fit. They must still send word of their progress to the Chamberlain at Weisshaupt annually. The First Warden maintains the right to summon any or all Warden-Commanders to Weisshaupt when necessary.

Warden-Constable
Formally called Constable of the Grey, the Warden-Constable is the second in command under a Warden-Commander. A constable will act as field commander and take charge when the Warden-Commander is called away for political or recruiting responsibilities.

Senior Warden
This is a formal title given to veteran Wardens deserving of special privilege. In some areas, such as Orlais, this title is known as Warden-Lieutenant. A Senior Warden may command a group of Wardens or embark on missions of particular importance. If a Warden-Constable is in command, he or she will likely take a Senior Warden as a second.

Warden
The rank-and-file Wardens take this simple title, though on paper they are called Warden-Ensigns. Members of the Order must undergo the Joining to become a true Warden.

Warden-Recruit
Any person accepted into the Wardens who has not yet taken the Joining is officially considered a Warden-Recruit. They are given a rank for committing to the Order, not easy considering it means giving up your family and country for a life of service fighting monsters. Many recruits do not survive the Joining, and their names are collected at the archives in Weisshaupt in honor of their sacrifice.

THE CALLING

Even those who survive the corrupting effects of the corruption never completely overcome them. Like a cancer, the taint slowly spreads through the body. Wardens of advancing age will eventually be overcome, slowly going mad as they are wracked with pain. Their bodies begin to rot and fester as they become more corrupted than not.

Before this happens, Wardens will honor a longstanding agreement with the dwarves and serve a year fighting darkspawn in the Deep Roads alongside them. When the corruption within the Warden has advanced to a point where the Warden can no longer stand it, the Warden descends alone down the darkest road to kill darkspawn until he or she is overrun.

The Warden's last step is inevitable. To die this way is considered noble by many. In the eyes of the Maker, it is said there is no greater sacrifice.

The ritual used to alter the nature of tainted blood ingested during a Joining is kept a strict secret among the Grey Wardens.

Rumors arise of someone resembling Morrigan, a hero of the Fifth Blight, alive in the Dragonbone Wastes. The Warden-Commander investigates.

The shipwrecked Qunari of Kirkwall are provoked to rise up in violence under the command of the Arishok. He beheads Viscount Dumar in front of his assembled nobles and seizes control of the city.

9:34 DRAGON

Hawke successfully drives the Qunari out in the First Battle of Kirkwall, and is named Champion by Kirkwall's Knight-Commander Meredith Stannard.

9:34 DRAGON

In the wake of the Qunari uprising, Kirkwall is left leaderless, a void filled by the Knight-Commander. She tightens control of the Kirkwall Circle.

9:34 DRAGON

A WARDEN'S ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

If an average person strikes the killing blow on an Archdemon, its spirit is released and travels to the nearest soulless darkspawn. The spirit possesses the creature and uses its power to transform the new body into another high dragon form. In this way, the Archdemon cannot be killed through normal means.

The only one capable of killing an Archdemon is a Grey Warden. When a Warden strikes the deathblow, the Archdemon's spirit still passes to the nearest tainted creature, but that creature is the Warden. Since the Warden has a soul, the attempt by the Archdemon to possess the Warden fails, destroying both souls in the process.

MAJESTIC BASTARDS

I remember the second-last one. I wouldn't get closer than sixty feet, double the wingspan. That left you time to move. The beast was too weak to do much. Still, seemed respectful to keep the distance and leave its end to animal and trainer. She starved out. Not the way they should go, and not the way I was used to seeing them.

Oh, they were majestic bastards, and they knew it. Ask any Warden dumped arse over ears for not picking nits. See, trainer and beast had a kinship and both knew what they wanted. For griffon, that bond meant grooming. Couldn't fault them. They needed what they needed. I mean, what's fair trade for saddling a warden-commander, full plate, lightning storm, sheer dive straight through an Archdemon's wing! Legendary, you can't argue! But back on the ground they knew they were owed. And you couldn't shortcut and douse them—they had all the majesty of a paddling rat if you water-logged the feathers. No, it was a grueling task of preening thirty bloody feet of wing. And you'd better remember, or maybe the thing got pissy next flight and cut an oak too close, give you a love tap so hard your next helm dented. Still, everything in balance, every talon tipped, there was nothing that compared. You could reach down from the sky and cradle Thedas in your hand.

Anyway, yes, I remember the second-last one. After she dropped, the robes took some crosscuts, because they do things like that. And then we burned it. And then I got drunk.

I do not remember the very last. And you can't make me.

—Comments of an unnamed Grey Warden, excerpted from Weisshaupt records on the extinction of a treasured species, liberated for public consideration by Philliam, a bard!

The Maker smiles sadly on his Grey Wardens, so the Chantry says, as no sacrifice is greater than theirs.

WEISSHAUPT

The fabled great fortress of Weisshaupt is built on the edge of a jagged butte called Broken Tooth in the southern Anderfels. During the height of the Wardens' power, the stone compound housed thousands alongside a thriving stable of griffons.

Weisshaupt is now a miserable, barren place and is home to only a few hundred Wardens. The reigning First Warden is rarely present, as he is said to be more interested in politicking and lining his pockets than fighting darkspawn. With the power of the Anders king lessening as anarchy takes hold in the blighted nation, Weisshaupt is growing as a symbol of authority in the region. Some whisper that the First Warden aims to take power over the Anderfels for himself. This is seen by many Wardens as an insult to an Order that flies no flag but its own in protection of all peoples.

Divine Beatrix III, long suffering from dementia, succumbs to old age.

9:34 DRAGON

Revered Mother Dorothea is named Divine Justinia V.

9:34 DRAGON

Anders, an apostate and friend of Hawke, destroys the Kirkwall chantry with the grand cleric still inside, inciting the Mage-Templar War that spreads throughout Thedas.

9:37 DRAGON

THE CHANT ON THE FIRST BLIGHT

No matter their power, their triumphs,
The mage-lords of Tevinter were men
And doomed to die.
Then a voice whispered within their hearts,
Shall you surrender your power
To time like the beasts of the fields?
You are the Lords of the earth!
Go forth to claim the empty throne
Of Heaven and be gods.

In secret they worked
Magic upon magic
All their power and all their vanity
They turned against the Veil
Until at last, it gave way.

Above them, a river of Light,
Before them the throne of Heaven, waiting,
Beneath their feet
The footprints of the Maker,
And all around them echoed a vast
Silence.

But when they took a single step
Toward the empty throne
A great voice cried out
Shaking the very foundations
Of Heaven and earth:

And So is the Golden City blackened
With each step you take in my Hall.
Marvel at perfection, for it is fleeting.
You have brought Sin to Heaven
And doom upon all the world.

Violently were they cast down,
For no mortal may walk bodily
In the realm of dreams,
Bearing the mark of their Crime:
Bodies so maimed
And distorted that none should see them
And know them for men.

Deep into the earth they fled,
Away from the Light.
In Darkness eternal they searched
For those who had goaded them on,
Until at last they found their prize,
Their god, their betrayer:
The sleeping dragon Dumat. Their taint
Twisted even the false-god, and the whisperer
Awoke at last, in pain and horror, and led
Them to wreak havoc upon all the nations of the world:
The first Blight.

—From Threnodies 8

HISTORY OF BLIGHTS

FIRST BLIGHT

When the Tevinter magisters were said to open a gate to the Golden City with blood magic in -395 Ancient, the result was catastrophic. The city turned black, the Old Gods were lost, and the magisters found themselves cast out as the first darkspawn. Eventually, these darkspawn found and corrupted the Old God Dumat with their taint, freeing and transforming him into the first Archdemon.

The darkspawn attacked en masse, concentrating at first on the underground Deep Roads used by the dwarves. As the thaigs fell, the darkspawn used the Deep Roads to travel under all points of the continent. All of the Imperium came under siege. It was chaos.

The Architect is a rare example of an intelligent darkspawn.

Hawke leads the push to stop the mages and templars as they clash in Kirkwall. The city's First Enchanter Orsino and Knight-Commander Meredith are both killed.

The people of Tevinter turned to the remaining Old Gods for help against Dumat, but received only silence. Believing themselves betrayed, many in the Imperium turned on the Old Gods.

After ninety years of fighting, the Grey Wardens were founded. The army, formed primarily of veterans from darkspawn battles, dedicated themselves to stopping the Blight at all costs. A fortress was built at Weisshaupt in the Anderfels, a region not as hard hit by the darkspawn but strategically close to Tevinter. There the Wardens undertook the experimental Joining ritual for the first time, giving them the power to sense darkspawn. The hardened first Wardens and their griffons pushed into the continent quickly, building fortresses at strategic points and recruiting more to the Order.

The Wardens gathered a formidable force made up largely of Tevinter, Rivain, and Ciriane soldiers to battle Dumat in -203 Ancient. The titanic clash in the southern reaches of Tevinter is known as the Battle of the Silent Plains, where Dumat was destroyed and the darkspawn were routed. Though the darkspawn forces remained large in number and the battle across Thedas persisted, they were pushed underground without Dumat to command them.

The Wardens used the victory to sign contracts with the nations of Thedas, ensuring their rights and solidifying their authority. They preached constantly about the possibility of another attack, should a second Old God awaken. Most, however, were reluctant to listen.

SECOND BLIGHT

The Second Blight began in the Anderfels with the rousing of Old God Zazikel, shortly after the start of the Divine Age. Under Zazikel, the darkspawn organized and once again surfaced in great numbers. The city of Hossberg was hit first, its people cut down to nearly one man before the Grey Wardens finally got word out.

The darkspawn emerged along the western ranges and moved east, eventually overrunning all corners of the continent. The Tevinter Imperium abandoned the Anderfels in an attempt to better protect itself, a betrayal remembered by the Anders to

Unrest brews in Orlais as Grand Duke Gaspard de Chalons stirs dissent against reigning Empress Celene I.

An apparent cure for Tranquility is discovered in Adamant Fortress at the Abyssal Reach.

9:38 DRAGON

9:40 DRAGON

this day. The Free Marches and Orlais too were hard pressed to defend themselves. There, the Grey Wardens and powerful armies under the command of the brilliant Emperor Drakon made the difference. Drakon led Orlais to victory over a massive horde at the Battle of Cumberland in 1:16 Divine but nearly lost the city of Montsimmard nine years later.

Tevinter, meanwhile, was greatly weakened by the darkspawn sacking of Minrathous in 1:31 Divine.

The armies of Orlais marched north to Weisshaupt. The Warden fortress was under siege and about to break, but with the help of Orlais, the Wardens fought back the darkspawn and saved their home. The Wardens were so impressed with Drakon that they converted to the Chantry, and together, the Wardens and Orlesians moved further north to salvage what was left of the Anderfels.

Emperor Drakon died of old age in 1:45 Divine, and the empire he had expanded in the midst of the Blight shrank under his son. But Chantry influence continued to spread across Thedas as the Blight persisted for fifty more years.

In 1:95 Divine, the last battle of the Second Blight was fought at Starkhaven with a largely human army led by the Wardens. The slaying of Zazikel in the strategic city-state forced the darkspawn back underground. The period that followed is known as the Rebuilding. It was a time when trade, culture, and religion flourished, as a generation of Thedosians who only knew life in the Blight finally found themselves free from its grip.

THIRD BLIGHT

A few ages passed before the next Blight, and many believed the Second Blight to be the last. Then, in 3:10 Towers, the Old God Toth awoke. The Third Blight erupted, hitting hard in southern Tevinter and northern Orlais. The darkspawn surfaced in greater numbers than ever before, spreading north to overwhelm the Tevinter cities of Marnas Pell and Vyrantium and south through Orlais from Churneau to Montsimmard. The Grey Wardens in both countries organized, and despite heavy losses in the besieged cities, the darkspawn were pushed back.

Empress Celene is called out of Val Royeaux after news of an elven rebellion in Halamshiral. The move is thought to have been orchestrated by Gaspard. Celene's absence fuels rumors of her death or capture.

9:40 DRAGON

Anticipating unrest, the Sun Gates to Val Royeaux are ordered closed for the first time since dragons attacked the city in 9:22 Dragon.

9:40 DRAGON

Darkspawn pressed east, and by 3:18 Towers, had ravaged the Free Marches, attacking all the bustling city-states along the Minanter River. At first, the Orlesians and Imperium did nothing, focusing on rebuilding their own damaged lands, but steady pressure from the Grey Wardens in Weisshaupt convinced both nations to eventually send aid to the beleaguered Marchers.

The armies of Orlais and Tevinter met in Hunter Fell and joined the Grey Wardens in the last battle of the Blight in 3:25 Towers. There they destroyed Toth and trounced the darkspawn in one of the bloodiest battles in history. Darkspawn carcasses were piled into mounds as high as a hundred feet and then burned, an image that took on a symbolic meaning for the people of the Free Marches.

However, the victorious armies of Tevinter and Orlais quickly squandered the goodwill of the Marchers, occupying territories liberated from darkspawn. Orlais took the city-state of Nevarra, while Tevinter took Hunter Fell. The people fought back, and Hunter Fell broke away from Tevinter in 3:49 Towers, with Nevarra achieving independence in 3:65 Towers.

FOURTH BLIGHT

Exalted Marches against the Imperium had been going on since the Black Age when the Old God Andoral woke in 5:12 Exalted, bringing a new Blight. Darkspawn surfaced in great numbers in the northeast and northwest reaches of the continent. The country of Antiva was overrun, and its entire ruling family was slaughtered. The darkspawn then poured into the Free Marches and Rivain. In the Anderfels, the city of Hossberg once again came under siege.

Orlais and the Tevinter Imperium were attacked by fewer numbers and were able to drive the darkspawn within their borders back into the ground. Despite their success, Tevinter refused to send any aid to the Free Marches or Anderfels, while Orlais only sent token forces.

The Grey Warden Garahel led the Anders and an army of Wardens to the city of Hossberg to break the siege. Garahel then gathered Wardens from Orlais and Anderfels and marched to Starkhaven in 5:20 Exalted. At Starkhaven, Garahel organized an

A violent uprising at the White Spire—a Circle Tower in Val Royeaux—leaves many senior mages dead. The uprising is apparently supported by the Divine through her agents, including the bard Leliana

9:40 DRAGON

Following the conflict at the White Spire, Lord Seeker Lambert cancels the Nevarran Accord, severing ties between the Seekers and the Chantry. Allegiances between Seekers and Templars are split. Some still support the Divine.

9:40 DRAGON

alliance between the minor kings of the Free Marches. A united army marched north under the banner of the Wardens.

Antiva was freed from the darkspawn during the infamous battle in 5:24 Exalted at the city of Ayesleigh, where Garahel died striking Andoral's killing blow. So many darkspawn were slaughtered during this battle that the people of Thedas came to believe the darkspawn would never again rise up in something so significant as a Blight.

The effects of the Blight persisted in the Anderfels but were largely ignored by most Thedosians, save for the Grey Wardens. Elsewhere, nations concentrated on rebuilding their own lots.

The griffons went extinct sometime after the Fourth Blight. Their likeness remains the symbol of Warden authority and it decorates all Warden armor.

FIFTH BLIGHT

It had been a long time since the Fourth Blight, and few thought the sudden appearance of more darkspawn in Ferelden during the Dragon Age to be anything more than an anomaly. The Ferelden Grey Wardens, few in number, knew better.

Ferelden's Warden-Commander, Duncan, rushed to bolster his Order's numbers as the darkspawn amassed under the stirring Old God Urthemiel.

The darkspawn first exposed their true numbers in 9:30 Dragon during the devastating Battle of Ostagar. King Cailan's trusted advisor, Loghain Mac Tir, quit the field in the heat of battle, leaving the king and the assembled Wardens trapped behind darkspawn lines without support. The Wardens, with the exception of the latest pair to join the Order, were slaughtered along with the king.

As the darkspawn marched north to Lothering to destroy the city, the surviving Wardens journeyed the length of Ferelden in search of support, earning the respect of disparate peoples and uniting them against the darkspawn threat. Together, the armies of Ferelden met Urthemiel at the capital, Denerim. The Archdemon was slain in the final bloody battle against the Wardens, ending the Blight and earning the last Warden recruited by Duncan the title "Hero of Ferelden."

Lord Seeker Lambert declares the Circle of Magi no more. The future of mages in Thedas is uncertain.

9:40 DRAGON

Lord Seeker Lambert goes missing and is presumed dead.

9:40 DRAGON

Seeker Cassandra Pentaghast, acting under the authority of the Divine, arrives in Kirkwall and interrogates Varric Tethras about Hawke.

9:40 DRAGON

appendix

BESTIARY

THERE ARE A GREAT MANY CREATURES IN THEDAS. Some are beasts of burden. Others are rare, even mythical things. They may lurk underground or soar overhead. Among the most dangerous are those born of the Blight.

Knowing which animals are harmless and which might eat you whole is essential for survival in this brutal world. Here is just a sampling of the many beasts and otherworldly monsters that call Thedas home.

ANIMALS

Great Wolf

The many animals native to Thedas vary greatly depending on their location, but generally fall into two distinct groups: those found aboveground and those that dwell underneath.

ABOVE GROUND

Wild animals such as rabbits, fish, spiders, rats, birds, bears, and wolves are common to forests and plains. In more populated areas, common domesticated animals include cats, dogs, chickens, and cows. Various breeds of each species exist throughout Thedas, from the working cattle of the Free Marches to the tiny toy dogs so popular in fashionable Orlesian circles.

Mabari

Mabari

Dogs are a significant part of Fereldan society, and no breed is more prized than the mabari. A Fereldan proverb holds that "the mabari is clever enough to speak, and wise enough to know not to." Prized for their intelligence and loyalty, mabari are more than mere weapons or status symbols. These hounds choose their masters and pair with them for life. To be the master of a mabari anywhere in Ferelden is to be instantly recognized as a person of worth.

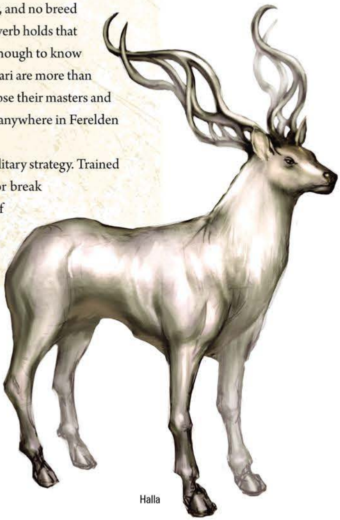
The mabari are an integral part of Fereldan military strategy. Trained hounds can easily pull knights from horseback or break lines of pikemen. The sight and sound of a wave of war dogs, howling and snarling, has been known to cause panic among even the most hardened infantry soldiers.

Halla

Halla are large, white, deerlike creatures that are sacred to the Dalish elves. They are much larger and swifter than their deer counterparts, with prominent, twisting horns. It is standard for a halla's keeper to carve its antlers as they grow, making them curve into unique and aesthetic shapes. The antlers fetch a high price in the Imperium.

In ancient times, halla carried Dalish knights into battle. With the fall of the Dales, halla are now most commonly seen pulling the aravels of the Dalish.

The Dalish regard halla as companions, rather than livestock.



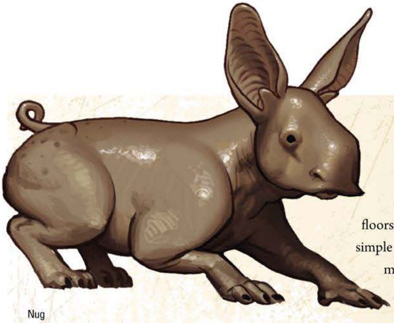
Halla

BELOW GROUND

Giant Spider

The giant arachnids that lurk in the depths of the Deep Roads feed mainly on large bats they catch in webbing, but have been known to attack larger prey. There are many varieties of giant spider. Though their size alone makes all kinds a threat, giant poisonous spiders are among the most deadly. At the center of a family of giant spiders is a queen. Her offspring are called spiderlings in early stages of development. Even the smallest spiderling can be dangerous.

Giant Spider


Nug

Nug

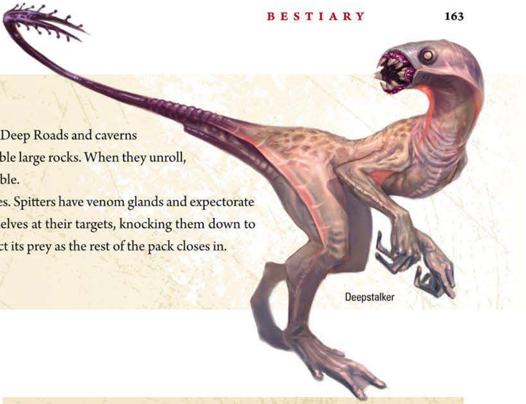
A nug is a hairless, nearly blind creature that resembles a small pig. These harmless, docile omnivores populate the underground tunnels of the dwarves, and are known to eat almost anything they find on the cavern floors, including insects, worms, and when the pickings are lean, limestone and simple metals. Their large snouts are excellent for digging in the shallow pools and mud pits they frequent; this practice led to the dwarven nickname of "mud splashers." Nugs can also be found in Orzammar proper, on the tables of the poorer slum areas or even as a domesticated pet.

Bronto

Brontos are hulking, sturdy animals selectively bred by the dwarven Shaperate as beasts of burden and food sources. Some breeds were developed as dwarven mounts, valued far more for their surefootedness and stamina than for their speed.

While present within Orzammar in large numbers, some brontos still exist in small packs within the Deep Roads, having returned to a wild state after the fall of the dwarven kingdoms. They require remarkably little sustenance, consuming organic material from water, fungus, and even rocks—hence the "rock licker" nickname ascribed to them by the dwarves. Brontos are generally docile, but are dangerous if provoked to charge.

Bronto



Deepstalker

Deepstalker

Deepstalkers are cave-dwelling creatures found largely in the Deep Roads and caverns beneath dwarven thaigs. When rolled up, the creatures resemble large rocks. When they unroll, their pointy, reptilian features and razor claws are unmistakable.

Deepstalkers hunt in small packs, and fall into several types. Spitters have venom glands and expectorate secretions that slow or injure their prey. Jumpers hurl themselves at their targets, knocking them down to accelerate the kill. A common stalker may instinctively distract its prey as the rest of the pack closes in.

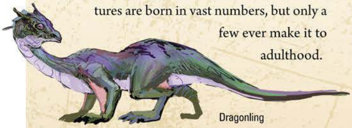
Dwarves call deepstalkers *tezpadam*.

DRAGONS

Dragons are fire-breathing, reptilian creatures that live primarily underground. They are classified by the various forms taken as they age. Dragons were long believed extinct, but reemerged at the end of the Blessed Age, prompting the Chantry to name the next age after them.

Dragonling

Newly hatched dragons are roughly the size of a deer and voraciously hungry. They live for a short time in their mother's lair before venturing out on their own. The slender, wingless creatures are born in vast numbers, but only a few ever make it to adulthood.



Dragonling

Drake

A drake is the mature form of a male dragon. Drakes are intelligent, almost sly, yet ferocious beasts. Once they have fully matured, male dragons seek out the lairs of adult females. When they find one, they move into her lair and spend the rest of their lives there, hunting for her and defending her young. Drakes never develop wings—at most, their forelegs grow vestigial spurs where wing membranes might have been. They have no need for powerful wings because once they bond with a female, they rarely travel far from her lair.

A high dragon will have a dozen or more drakes guarding her young, constantly fighting among themselves for the right to mate. They will aggressively defend her nest, and many would-be dragon hunters have been lost to their fiery breath and crushing blows from their tails. Drakes can live for a century, but usually die much earlier while defending the lair.

Dragon

The term "dragon" technically refers to the adult female to the male drake. Dragons are quick, naturally armored, and command torrents of fire as easily as a man hefts a sword. Around a hundred years of age, females darken in color and grow the iconic wings of their species. Naturally inquisitive and aggressive, they range far and wide in search of a lair. This is the most likely time that the species will come into conflict with people. Keeping an area free of suitable nesting sites such as abandoned ruins or open cave networks can encourage the creature to move on, but dragons are so rare that few Thedosians think to take precautions. Dragons do not speak, but their resilience will surprise any who might regard them as unintelligent.

Dragon

High Dragon

A fully mature adult female is known as a high dragon: a great winged monster of legend and the rarest of all dragonkind. High dragons hollow out massive lairs for the space needed to house an entire harem of drakes, as well as eggs and dragonlings.

High dragons are seldom seen in Thedas. They spend most of their time sleeping, mating, and living off the prey their drakes provide. When a high dragon prepares to lay eggs, she will emerge from her lair and take wing, flying far and wide, eating hundreds of wild animals and livestock over the course of a few weeks and leaving smoldering devastation in her wake. She will return to her lair to lay her clutch and will not be seen again outside the lair for many years.

High Dragon

BLIGHTED CREATURES

DARKSPAWN

Darkspawn are not a race unto themselves so much as a collection of humans, elves, dwarves, and other creatures twisted into monsters by the Blight.

Broodmother

Broodmothers are tainted females of multiple races, kidnapped by darkspawn to be ravaged and transformed into giant broodmothers that breed more darkspawn. All of a broodmother's offspring will be darkspawn variations of her race.

Broodmother

Hurlock

The most common darkspawn are hurlocks. Of human origin, hurlocks are essentially foot soldiers, roughly human sized, but possessing considerably more strength and stamina than an average human. The crudely carved tattoos with which hurlocks adorn themselves seem to keep track of their kills and deeds, though it is unknown whether these markings have any uniform standard.

Hurlock

Genlock

Genlock

Genlocks are a stocky breed said to be the most numerous of all darkspawn. Retaining both the strength and hardiness of their dwarven origins, they are notoriously difficult to kill. Their skin is pale, sometimes yellowish. Their heads are much larger in proportion to their muscular bodies than those of their hurlock counterparts, and their shoulders and arms are hulking. Like dwarves, they tend to resist magic.

Shriek

Elf-derived darkspawn are known as shrieks because of the earsplitting cries they emit in battle. They are the assassins of the darkspawn, hunting in the dark of night with incredible speed and agility. Shriek talons and teeth are incredibly sharp—their preferred tactic is to leap on their prey and tear it to ribbons. They are thin, with barklike skin that ranges from light green to dark brown. Shrieks retain both a natural elven agility and relative fragility. Although only a few solid strikes are needed to kill a shriek, landing those blows is difficult.

Shriek

Ogre

Ogre

Towering over their darkspawn kin, the massive ogres are a rare but heart-stopping sight on the battlefield. Spawned from kossith broodmothers, ogres are huge and broad with long, muscular arms and massive curved horns atop their heads, which they use to viciously charge attackers. Ogres usually only appear during Blights, but some records claim that they have been spotted in the Deep Roads hunting alone or in small groups. During a Blight, up to a hundred of these creatures can accompany a darkspawn horde at any one time, using their great strength to burst through fortifications and demolish the frontlines of an opposing army.

Children

Children are large, grublike darkspawn birthed by a unique sentient broodmother known as "the Mother." These monsters emerge from underground, appearing first in their larval stage as childer grubs wriggling on the ground. If these grubs eat the flesh of slain darkspawn, they sprout legs. They can then run down prey with startling speed. Upon gorging itself again, the childer transforms into a full child, its spindly limbs tipped with spikes that skewer its victims.

Child

Disciple

A disciple is an intelligent breed of darkspawn capable of advanced speech, free will, and tactical organization. Disciples were created by an intelligent emissary darkspawn known as the Architect after he gave them Grey Warden blood in an attempt to free them from the calling of the Old Gods.

Disciple

Archdemon

An Archdemon is an Old God that has taken the form of a massive, corrupted high dragon. The Archdemons exercise great influence over darkspawn, who seek to wake them from their slumber deep underground. In the history of Thedas, only five Archdemons have appeared. The Wardens speculate that two more lurk somewhere underground, still in slumber. They believe the Blight will end only if these remaining Archdemons are slain.

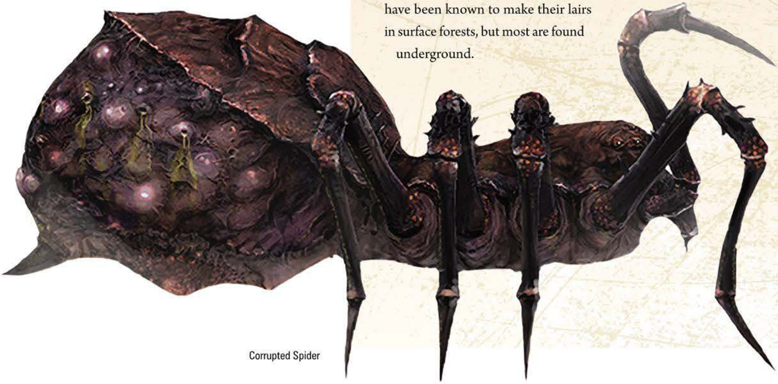
THE CORRUPTED

Blight Owl

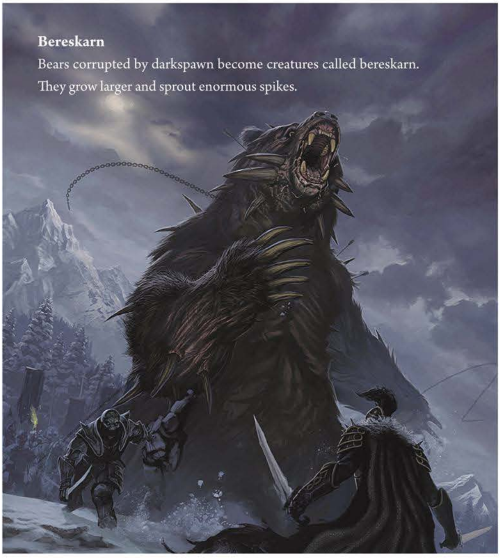
Owls warped by the Blight sprout blackened feathers. Their eyes turn blood red and their beaks split in four parts.

Corrupted Spider

When the Deep Roads were lost to the darkspawn, giant spiders began to feed on dead darkspawn. Their numbers grew exponentially, as did their size. The darkspawn taint has become a permanent part of their systems and is passed on to their progeny. Some corrupted spiders have been known to make their lairs in surface forests, but most are found underground.



Corrupted Spider



Bereskarn

Bears corrupted by darkspawn become creatures called bereskarn. They grow larger and sprout enormous spikes.

Blight Wolf

A tainted wolf loses much of its hair, taking on a terrifying skeletal appearance.

Blighted Werewolf

A werewolf infected by the taint similarly sheds its coat, transforming into something even more horrifying.

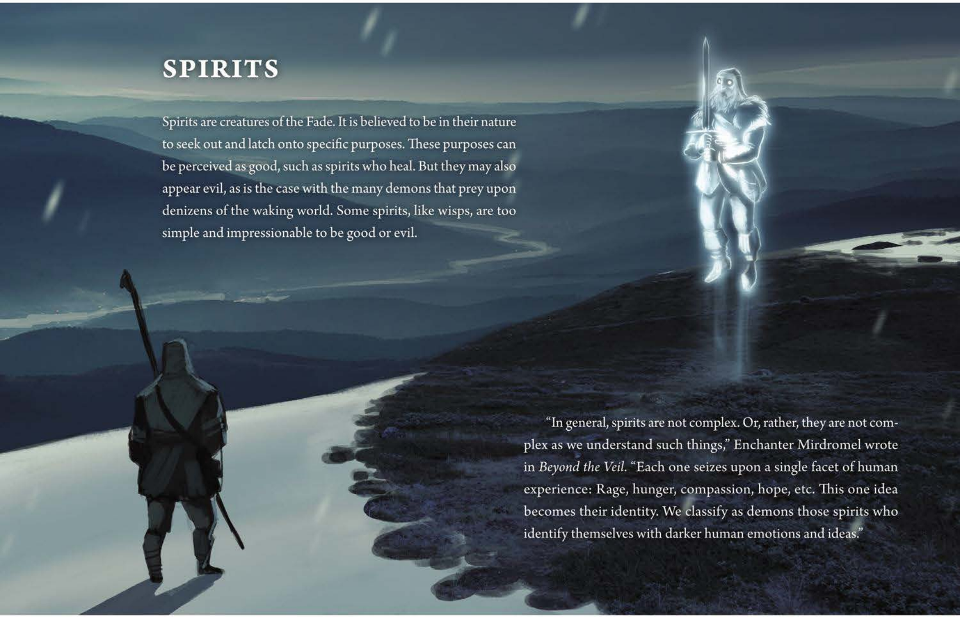
Dragon Thrall

When any dragon that has not reached full maturity becomes blighted, the resulting horrific mutation is known as a "dragon thrall."

Ghoul

Humans, dwarves, or elves corrupted by the blight but unfortunate enough to remain alive become ghouls: sore-covered, twisted shadows of their former selves. Often corrupted while held by darkspawn as a captive food source, they prey cannibalistically on other prisoners, slaves to the Archdemon's will and driven mad by pain.

SPIRITS



Spirits are creatures of the Fade. It is believed to be in their nature to seek out and latch onto specific purposes. These purposes can be perceived as good, such as spirits who heal. But they may also appear evil, as is the case with the many demons that prey upon denizens of the waking world. Some spirits, like wisps, are too simple and impressionable to be good or evil.

"In general, spirits are not complex. Or, rather, they are not complex as we understand such things," Enchanter Mirdromel wrote in *Beyond the Veil*. "Each one seizes upon a single facet of human experience: Rage, hunger, compassion, hope, etc. This one idea becomes their identity. We classify as demons those spirits who identify themselves with darker human emotions and ideas."

BENEVOLENT SPIRITS

Wisps

These minor spirits tend to act on command rather than of their own accord, as they seem to possess very little independent consciousness. Because a wisp is so easily influenced, its behavior outside the Fade depends on the instructions of its summoner. Without influence, a wisp may be content to simply float around.

Spirits of Justice

Powerful and benevolent, justice spirits embody the noble virtue of justice. It is rumored that the mage Anders was the host body for a justice spirit when he played a part in the destruction of Kirkwall's chantry in 9:37 Dragon.

Spirits of Valor

Valor spirits exist to seek out the perfect expression of combat in the pursuit of valor. Some mages tell stories of encountering valor spirits in the Fade during their Harrowings. These mages speak of being challenged to combat. If deemed worthy, a valor spirit would support a mage in their final test of the Harrowing, battle with a demon.

Spirits of Compassion

While not as strong as spirits of valor or justice, many compassion spirits have good relationships with healing mages, who call them from the Fade to help treat disease and injury in the waking world.

Spirits of Faith

Spirits of faith are very strong and quite rare. Little is known about them. Some mages say that the great mage healer Wynne was once saved from death in the Circle Tower at Kinloch Hold by a spirit of faith, which bonded to her, sustaining her life.

Spirits of Hope

Spirits of hope are some of the strongest benevolent spirits in the Fade. However, they don't often appear in the waking world because little there attracts them.

DEMONS

Wisp Wraith

While still relatively weak spirits, wisp wraiths have more consciousness than average wisps. Said by some to be demons that have lost their power, wisp wraiths have either existed in the real world for too long without finding true hosts, or they have been cut down—often by other demons.

While their ability to target a living creature is limited, these wisps often mindlessly attack when encountered in the Fade. In the living world, it is said that wisp wraiths will maliciously trick the living into thinking they're lanterns and lead them into dangerous areas. This, however, seems to be the limit of their cunning.

Pride Demon

Pride Demon

Pride demons draw their incredible power from the prideful thoughts of those in the living world. While possessing a host—dead or alive—these demons can channel their power into many weapons, freezing people in place one moment, then burning them the next with magical flame. They can also repel the magic of others, rendering themselves immune to spells cast upon them.

"The most powerful demons yet encountered are the pride demons," Mirdromel wrote, "perhaps because they, among all their kind, most resemble men."

Rage Demon

Shade

A shade is the true form of a demon when it occupies the living world. Some scholars believe their confusion with the waking world leaves them unable to possess the living or dead. Some shades may spurn possession, content to float as shadows, preying upon the psyche of anyone they encounter. It has been speculated that shades may still believe themselves to be in the Fade.

The living are weakened by a shade's proximity. Dangerous, they have been known to assault the minds of the living, causing confusion or horror that make their targets ripe for killing. Draining a target entirely only strengthens a shade's appetite.

Rage Demon

Among the most common and weakest malicious spirits, rage demons are fueled by and attracted to rage. In the Fade, a rage demon's true form is pure fire, its body seemingly made of amorphous lava, its eyes two pinpricks of baleful light radiating from its core. Their abilities are drawn from the fire they generate. Burning anyone who draws near, the most powerful can lash out with bolts of fire or firestorms that engulf entire areas.

Even powerful rage demons are less intelligent than most other varieties. Their actions are irrational, even by spirit standards, and fueled by unbridled anger.

Hunger Demon

Rare even in the Fade, hunger demons are characterized by a compulsion to consume—or attempt to consume—everything they encounter, including other demons. Hunger demons most often appear in the waking world by possessing abominations or skeletons, although they have also been known to inhabit living people.

Sloth Demon

Sloth demons are not themselves slothful—they are so named because they feed upon the slothful recesses of the psyche: doubt, apathy, and entropy. A sloth demon weakens, tires, and tears at the edges of consciousness and would much rather render its victims helpless than engage in true conflict.

Sloth demons can disguise their appearance outside the Fade so as to more covertly spread their influence. It is said that they can influence entire groups of people. A community afflicted by a demon of sloth could soon become a dilapidated pit where injustices are allowed to pass without comment and none of the residents are aware a change has even occurred.

Desire Demon

Desire Demon

Desire demons use the yearnings of waking-world inhabitants—lust, wealth, and power—to lure their prey. Far more intelligent than the bestial hunger and rage demons and more ambitious than sloth demons, these dark spirits are among the most skilled at tempting mages into possession. Many who serve the whims of a desire demon never realize it. In some cases, a desire demon may resort to outright mind control. But they seem to take greater pleasure in more subtle deceit.

If overpowered, a desire demon will attempt to bargain its way to freedom. Tales are told of mages who defeat desire demons and wrest wishes from them. However, these stories also usually end with the demons getting the upper hand, even when the mages believe their wishes are granted.

Sylvan

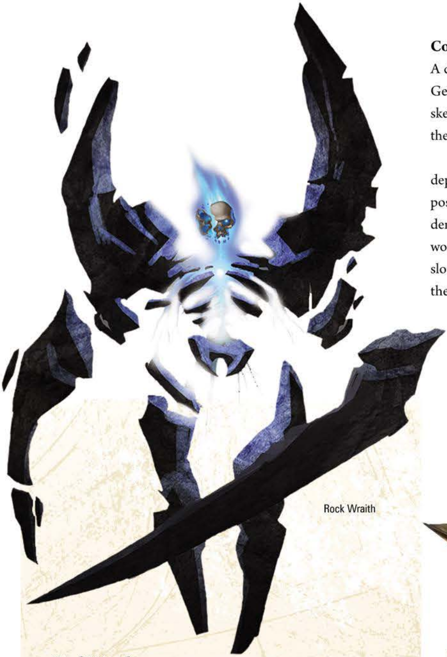
POSSESSED CREATURES

Sylvan

For demons crossing over into our world, mankind is not always the preferred prey. As possessing humans means risking encounters with powerful mages and templars, some demons find it far easier to seek out animals or even plants. Those that possess trees are known as wild sylvans.

Generally, only rage demons become sylvans. The demon will spend considerable time and effort twisting and molding the host to make it mobile. A sylvan is a walking tree and if violent can prove very dangerous. Other, more intelligent, spirits have also been known to become sylvans. These are rare, but generally much less threatening.

Slow but immensely powerful, wild sylvans prefer to lie in wait for a victim to become lost, tired, or trapped in the forest. They hide among regular trees, nearly undetectable until they begin to move and reach. When they "come to life," as some travelers say, sylvans stand tall, with roots forming legs and branches stretching into lashing arms.


Rock Wraith

Corpse

A dead body may be possessed by a demon. Generally, weaker demons possess corpses or skeletons, unable to tell the difference between the living and the dead.

The possessed corpse may act differently depending on the kind of demon that has possessed it: Corpses possessed by rage demons attack residents of the waking world mindlessly. Corpses possessed by sloth demons weaken and fatigue their prey. Those held by hunger demons feed upon the living.

Corpse

Rock Wraith

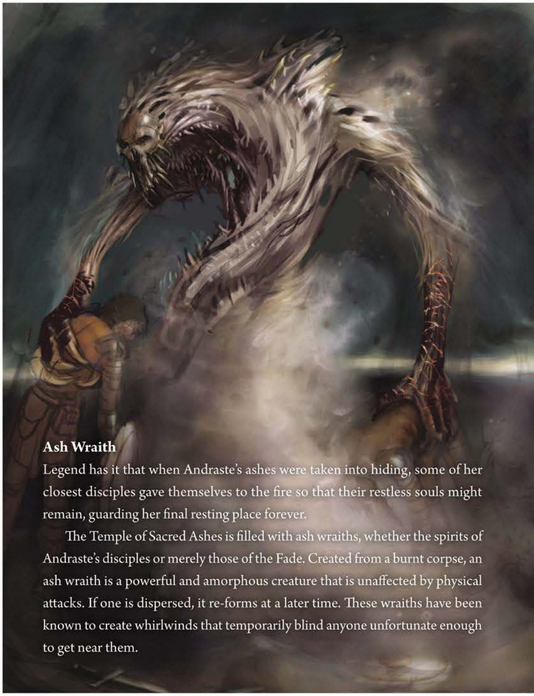
A rock wraith is a humanoid mass of rock said by the dwarves to be possessed by the spirits of transgressors rejected by the Stone at death.

"What I thought was rubble gathered beneath my feet, taking a terrible form: a beast of stone surrounding the shattered skeleton of a man," wrote Amrun, a member of the Legion of the Dead. "One swing of its boulder hand crushed the emissary, and then it turned its eyeless skull toward us. We fled back up the tunnel, its heavy footsteps thundering at our backs . . . When it came to the exit, it struck the trusses holding up the ceiling of the shaft, closing itself in forever. Perhaps, in the end, it felt remorse. Perhaps it was one lost soul recognizing another."

Revenant

Revenant

A revenant is a corpse possessed by a desire or pride demon. They are more powerful than most possessed corpses, and may don armor and carry weapons. Bent as they are on physical destruction, revenants can destroy entire groups of living victims at one time.



Ash Wraith

Legend has it that when Andraste's ashes were taken into hiding, some of her closest disciples gave themselves to the fire so that their restless souls might remain, guarding her final resting place forever.

The Temple of Sacred Ashes is filled with ash wraiths, whether the spirits of Andraste's disciples or merely those of the Fade. Created from a burnt corpse, an ash wraith is a powerful and amorphous creature that is unaffected by physical attacks. If one is dispersed, it re-forms at a later time. These wraiths have been known to create whirlwinds that temporarily blind anyone unfortunate enough to get near them.

Arcane Horror

Arcane Horror

An arcane horror is a specific type of abomination created when a pride demon possesses the corpse of a mage. These powerful creatures are capable of casting spells and healing and commanding other corpses, and are largely immune to certain types of magic.

Abomination

Abomination

If a demon takes control of a mage, the powerful creature created is known as an abomination.

Although rare, abominations are usually created when a mage of weak constitution enters the Fade and is directly exposed to a demon's influences. Once an abomination is created, it will do all it can to create more abominations. To separate a bond between a mage and a demon, the Litany of Adralla can be invoked.

OTHER CURIOUS CREATURES

Golem

A golem is a powerful creature made of stone or metal, animated by the dwarves with lyrium. Most commonly made of rock, they rarely speak. Golems can be controlled using enchanted control rods. Without these rods, golems are left to their own will.

Golems have historically proven devastating weapons in war, living siege engines capable of hurling boulders like a catapult or plowing through enemy lines like an earthquake. In ancient times, dwarves sold many golems to the magister lords of Tevinter. However, the few golems that remain today are closely guarded by the Shaperate, summoned only when the battle against the darkspawn grows desperate enough to risk their loss.

The first golem was crafted by Paragon Caridin during the First Blight to combat the growing threat of the darkspawn on the thaigs and the surface world. Caridin used the Anvil of the Void to create his golems, using a dwarven volunteer to infuse life into each golem. When then-king Valtor began forcing casteless and criminal dwarves, as well as his political enemies, to "volunteer," Caridin refused to make any more. Valtor ordered Caridin to be turned into a golem.

Golem

Harvester

After Caridin's Anvil of the Void went missing, numerous attempts were made to re-create his methods in order to produce more golems. One of the most unfortunate of these experiments substituted the remains of dead casteless dwarves for the steel and stone of traditional golems. The result was the Harvester, a twisted mess of body parts, bound together, then reanimated by a Fade spirit.

Harvester

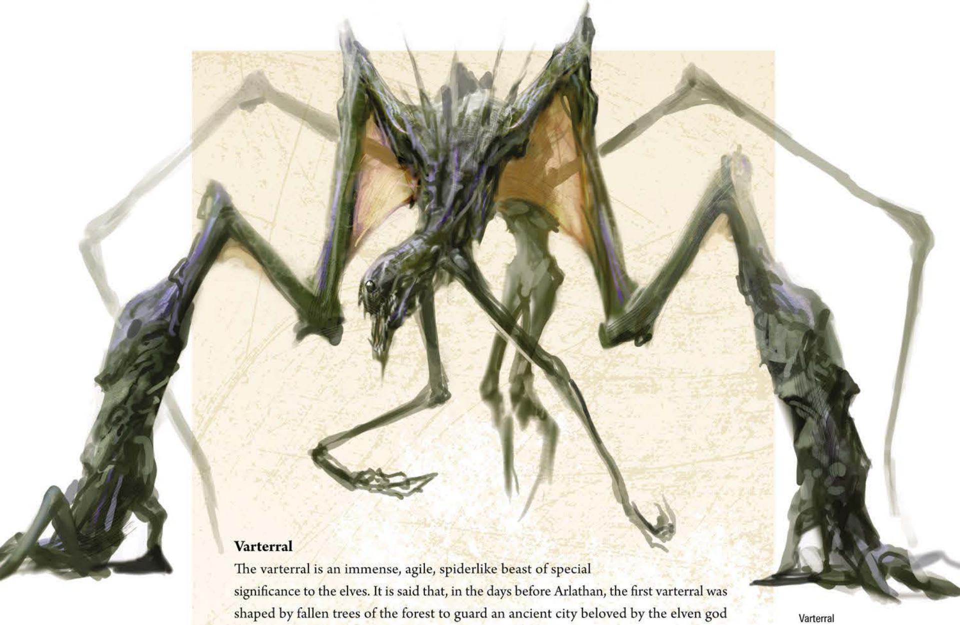
Ghast

A ghast is a small, vicious biped that dwells in mountain caves. One of these nattering creatures is little more than a nuisance and will flee if threatened. A pack of five or more, however, are much bolder and can easily overwhelm a bear. Although ghasts are cunning and able to cooperate for survival, they show no signs of true intelligence. They are unable to speak, communicating only through grunts and squeals.

Ghast

Velghastrial

Occasionally, a pack of ghasts will include a strange creature known as a velghastrial. Although similar in appearance to a common ghast, the velghastrial can wield magic. Observers have speculated velghastrials first learned magic by lurking around and watching other mages. Others believe that ghasts, like animals, are sensitive to the unseen forces that shape our world and that the velghastrial is able to utilize magic purely through instinct. It is unknown if velghastrials risk possession when casting spells, as mages of other races do.


Varterral

Varterral

The varterral is an immense, agile, spiderlike beast of special significance to the elves. It is said that, in the days before Arlathan, the first varterral was shaped by fallen trees of the forest to guard an ancient city beloved by the elven god Dirthamen, Keeper of Secrets. Varterrals move with lightning speed, unleash vicious strikes, and spatter enemies with venomous spit.

Elven tales have it that if a varterral is charged with guarding something, it will stay alive no matter how many times an enemy may strike it down.

Werewolf

Werewolf

Fereldan lore is full of stories about wolves who transform into humanoid monsters with incredible speed and strength. They are said to be able to spread their curse to those they bite, driving these victims mad. When in this enraged state, a human host undergoes a transformation into a feral, wolflike beast. Tales differ on these werewolves of human origin, with some claiming that their transformation into a bestial form happens temporarily, while still others say the transformation is irreversible.

Wyvern

Most often found in Orlais, wyverns are generally believed to be smaller cousins of dragons. Unlike dragons, wyverns are solitary and will aggressively defend a territory against encroachment, even by other wyverns. Wyverns' vicious temperaments are legendary, and Orlesian hunters tell tales of female wyverns killing high dragons who wander too close to their nests. Native to only a few mountain ranges in Thedas, these creatures are extremely rare.

Although they have wings, wyverns do not truly fly. They glide, and can do so over many miles. Like their dragon cousins, wyverns have been spotted leaping many times their own body lengths. They have very strong claws and can climb even completely vertical rock surfaces. The most dangerous thing about a wyvern is its venom. When provoked, wyverns spit poison at a range of several yards. Left untreated, this poison is invariably fatal.

Wyvern

GLOSSARY

A

Adamant. An old Grey Warden fortress built during the Second Blight at the mouth of the Abyssal Reach in western Orlais.

Aequitarians. A sizable mage fraternity that advocates temperance.

age. A period of one hundred years. Each new age is named by the Chantry based on a portent of coming events.

Alamarri. Barbarian humans who settled in the land now known as Ferelden. Most Fereldans trace their roots to the Alamarri.

alienage. A section of an urban community reserved for elves. Often walled off from the rest of a city, many alienages are ghettos rife with poverty and crime.

Altus. The ruling class of Tevinter mages.

Amaranthine Ocean. An ocean off the eastern coast of Thedas.

Ambassadoria. The body of dwarven representatives that advises the Tevinter Imperium's leaders and manages trade between the Imperium and dwarves.

Ander. A resident of the Anderfels.

Anderfels. A nation in northwest Thedas known for its destitution, a product of near-constant battle with darkspawn.

Andoral. A Tevinter Old God who awoke and became an Archdemon, spurring the Fourth Blight. Also known as the Dragon of Slaves.

Andraste. The prophet whose teachings of the Maker led to the creation of the Chantry.

Andrastian. A follower of the teachings of the prophet. Also used to describe something related to those teachings.

Andruil. The ancient elven goddess of the hunt. Also known as Sister of the Moon, Mother of Hares, and Lady of the Hunt.

Antiva. A nation in central Thedas known for its wine, sailing, and rich merchant history.

Antiva City. The capital of Antiva.

Antivan Crows. An infamous guild of assassins based in Antiva.

Anvil of the Void. The anvil forged by the dwarven Paragon Caridin to make golems. All stone golems came from this anvil.

apostate. A mage who will not join the Circle or who flees the Circle after joining. This term is often used to describe any mage outside of the Circle.

aravel. A large, ornate Dalish wagon drawn by halla.

Arbor Wilds. An immense stretch of dense forest south of the Dales in southern Orlais.

arcane horror. A dangerous creature created when a pride demon takes control of a mage's corpse.

Archdemon. A corrupted Old God that has taken the form of a massive high dragon.

Archon. The mage monarch of the Tevinter Imperium. This is usually an inherited position, but an Archon may be elected, as a last resort, by the Magisterium.

Arigena. Head of the Qunari matriarchy and one-third of the Qunari triumvirate. Responsible for looking after the good of the community.

Ariqun. Head of the Qunari priesthood and one-third of the Qunari triumvirate. Responsible for the maintenance of public spirituality and the progress of science.

Arishok. Head of the Qunari military and one-third of the Qunari triumvirate. Responsible for the protection and safety of Qunari society, as well as its expansion.

arl. A term of Fereldan nobility, roughly the equivalent of a mayor. The feminine form is *arlessa*.

Arlathan. A forest east of what is now the Tevinter Imperium. Formerly, home to an ancient elven city of the same name.

Ash Warriors. An elite band of Fereldan mercenaries with strong Alamarri roots. They learned their fighting skills from the dwarves.

Ashkaari. A Qunari title meaning *great scholar* or *scientist*.

August. The eighth month of the Chantry calendar.

Avvar. A tribe of barbarians who live in the Frostback Mountains of western Ferelden.

B

bann. A Fereldan noble who holds a sizable portion of rural land.

Bannorn. The collected farmlands of Ferelden's many banns.

bard. An Orlesian spy who masquerades as an entertainer to get close to targets. Bards in Orlais are feared as much as they are respected.

Basvaarad. A Qunari mage keeper.

Ben-Hassrath. The Qunari secret police.

bereskarn. A blighted bear.

Black Age. The fourth age of the Chantry calendar, named as the Chantry called for retribution against the "Black Divine" of the Imperium.

Black City. The corrupted city visible at all points in the Fade, said to be the former seat of the Maker or the realm of the Old Gods, depending on the religious perspective.

Blessed Age. The eighth age of the Chantry calendar, heralded as a period of great bounty and prosperity.

blight. The corruption carried by the darkspawn.

Blight. An attack in which darkspawn, led by an Archdemon, rise up and attempt to corrupt all life in Thedas.

blood magic. The use of blood to power magic. A person who wields blood magic is called a blood mage.

Bloomingtide. The fifth month of the Chantry year.

Brecilian Forest. The largest forest in Ferelden.

bronto. A hulking pack animal bred by the dwarves as a beast of burden.

broodmother. A tainted female that births litters of darkspawn.

C

Calling. A Warden ritual in which an aging Warden descends into the Deep Roads to end his or her life.

calling. The call of the Old Gods.

Canticle. A book in the Chant of Light.

Carta. A dwarven criminal organization.

Cassus. The traditional name for the month of Haring.

caste. A social class that determines a dwarf's standing in dwarven society, which is separated into families of nobles, merchants, smiths, and others.

casteless. The dwarven term for those without a caste, who occupy the lowest class in dwarven society.

Champion of Kirkwall. The title given to Hawke after saving Kirkwall from the Qunari.

Chant of Light. The Chantry's holy book. It was written by the followers of Andraste, with portions said to be penned by the prophet herself.

chanter. A devout member of the Chantry who dedicates the remainder of his or her days to the religion. Chanters take strict oaths that include never uttering a word that isn't the Chant of Light.

Chantry. A religious organization dedicated to the teachings of Andraste and her Cult of the Maker.

chantry. A Chantry temple.

Chasind. A tribe of Fereldan barbarians who live in the Korcari Wilds.

chevalier. An Orlesian knight.

Circle of Magi. A Chantry-associated organization of mages that teaches the proper use of magic. Circles double as mage prisons.

city elf. An elf who lives in the city, as opposed to one who lives with the nomadic Dalish.

cloudgazer. A derogatory term to describe dwarves who have been on the surface so long they've lost their Stone sense.

Cloudreach. The fourth month of the Chantry calendar.

College of Enchanters. The disbanded governing body of Circle mages in Cumberland.

Commander of the Grey. The leader of the Grey Wardens at Weisshaupt.

common tongue: The dominant language in most human nations. It originates from the Alamarri people.

corrupted. A term used to describe someone or something infected with the blight.

Coterie. A major criminal organization that operates primarily out of Kirkwall.

Cult of the Maker. The broader belief in the Maker and the teachings of Andraste. Believers in the Cult of the Maker may or may not identify with the Chantry.

D

Dairsmuid. The capital of Rivain.

Dales. A region in southern Thedas once given to the elves by Maferath and Andraste, and later invaded by Orlais.

Dalish. A group of nomadic elves who refuse to live among humans.

darkspawn. Tainted creatures that live underground in search of slumbering Old Gods. They are not a race unto themselves, but rather twisted versions of other races and creatures.

deathroot. A fragile purple plant with red fruit that causes disorientation and dizziness. Deathroot is a common ingredient in potions.

deep mushroom. A mushroom that grows in the Deep Roads. It is difficult to obtain but prized by herbalists.

Deep Roads. A system of underground tunnels built by the dwarves to connect thaigs underneath Thedas.

deepstalker. A lizardlike creature that lurks in caves and the Deep Roads.

demon. A malicious Fade spirit. Demons embody negative emotions like rage or fear.

Denerim. The capital of Ferelden.

deshyr. A dwarven representative of a noble house in Orzammar.

Dirthamen. An ancient elven god known as the Keeper of Secrets.

disciple. May refer to a celebrated follower of Andraste or one of an intelligent breed of darkspawn created by the Architect.

Divine. The spiritual leader of the Chantry.

Divine Age. The first age of the Chantry calendar, named for the first Divine.

Donarks. A jungle in the extreme north of Thedas.

dragon. A fire-breathing, reptilian creature that lives primarily underground. Dragons come in various forms, depending on their age.

Dragon Age. The ninth age of the Chantry calendar, named for the reemergence of dragons after ages of extinction.

dragon cult. A cult that worships a dragon or dragons. These cults became more common after the resurgence of dragons at the start of the Dragon Age.

dragonbone. A rare material made from the bones of dragons that can be used to craft incredibly strong armor and weapons.

dragonling. A young dragon.

drake. A mature male dragon.

Drakonis. The third month of the Chantry calendar.

dreadnought. A massive Qunari warship.

Dreamer. One among the first humans said to communicate with the Old Gods and learn magic. Now used to refer to any sleeping or lost person's presence in the Fade.

Dumat. The Tevinter Old God who awoke as an Archdemon, beginning the First Blight. Also known as the Dragon of Silence.

durgen'len. The elven name for dwarves, loosely translated as *children of the Stone*.

dwarves. A race of stout builders who live underground and are naturally immune to magic.

E

elves. A common race in Thedas distinguished physically by their beanstalk stature and pointy ears.

elfroot. A root first used by the elves that is popular for its medicinal qualities.

Elgar'nan. An ancient elven god of vengeance and the sun, the All-Father.

eluvian. An ancient elven mirror of mysterious purpose.

Eluviesta. The traditional name for the month of Cloudreach.

elvhen. The name the elves once called themselves. It has largely fallen into disuse, except among the Dalish.

Elvhenan. The name the ancient elves gave to their land, meaning "place of our people."

embrium. A flower of the orchid family used by healers.

enchanter. A mage of some experience.

Estwatch. A pirate island off the coast of the Free Marches.

Exalted Age. The fifth age of the Chantry calendar, named during a series of Exalted Marches on the Tevinter Imperium.

Exalted March. A holy war called by the Chantry to smite a threat to Chantry order.

F

Fade. A mysterious dream world inhabited by spirits, believed by many to be the realm of a god or gods.

Falon'Din. An ancient elven god known as the Friend of the Dead or the Guide.

Feast Day. A Fereldan holiday where gifts are given and pranks are pulled.

felandaris. A twisted shrub that only grows where the Veil is thin. The name is elven, meaning *demon weed*.

felicidus aria. A plant used in the creation of ambrosia. Also known as the Silent Plains rose, this rare plant only grows on the Silent Plains.

Felicisima Armada. The formal name for raiders who banded together to fight back the Qunari at sea during the New Exalted Marches.

Fen'Harel. An ancient elven trickster god, also known as the Dread Wolf.

Ferelden. A nation in southern Thedas with barbarian roots.

Ferventis. The traditional name for the month of Justinian.

First Day. A holiday to mark the beginning of the year.

Firstfall. The eleventh month of the Chantry calendar.

flat-ear. A derogatory term for a human used by elves.

Formari. The branch of the Circle devoted to item enchantment.

Free Marches. A loose confederation of city-states in the breadbasket of Thedas.

Frostback Mountains. A mountain range dividing Orlais and Ferelden.

Frumentum. The traditional name for the month of Harvestmere.

G

gaatlok. An explosive powder used by the Qunari.

Garahel. The famous Grey Warden whose sacrifice ended the Fourth Blight.

genlock. One of a robust breed of darkspawn dwarves.

ghast. A small, vicious creature that hunts in packs and lives in mountain caves.

ghoul. A human male corrupted by the effects of the blight.

glitterdust. A powdered form of sparkling rock found most commonly along the Wounded Coast near Kirkwall.

Glory Age. The second age of the Chantry calendar, named for predictions of a grand rebirth after the devastation of the First Blight.

Golden City. A magnificent city said to once have been the home of the Maker or the Old Gods of Tevinter. When the Golden City turned black, the First Blight began.

golem. A creature made of stone and infused with the life of a dwarf.

Grand Proving. A dwarven tradition of battle as spectator sport. The victors are given elevated status in dwarven society.

Grand Tourney. A spectacular, traveling tournament and festival hosted in the various Free Marches and sometimes beyond.

Great Game. An Orlesian tradition of social climbing by any means necessary.

Grey Warden. A member of a legendary order charged with studying and ending the Blights that threaten to destroy Thedas.

griffon. An extinct, winged beast the Grey Wardens once used as mounts.

grimoire. A book of spells.

Guardian. The second month of the Chantry calendar.

H

halla. A white, ruminant animal kept by the Dalish.

Haring. The twelfth month of the Chantry calendar.

Harrowing. A dangerous ritual every Circle apprentice must undergo to become a mage.

Harvestmere. The tenth month of the Chantry calendar.

Heartlands. The bountiful rural farmland of central Orlais.

hedge mage. A mage who has not received formal training.

Hero of Ferelden. The title given to a brave Warden who defeated the Archdemon Urthemiel to end the Fifth Blight in Ferelden.

Hossberg. The capital of the Anderfels.

Hunterhorn Mountains. A large mountain range in western Thedas.

hurlock. A common darkspawn derived from humans.

I

Imperial Chantry. The Tevinter version of the Chantry, alike in its worship of the Maker, different in its views on magic.

Imperial Highway. A massive highway built at the height of the Tevinter empire from one end of Thedas to the other.

Inquisition. A now-defunct order that hunted mages and heretics in the name of the Maker. The Inquisition was a precursor to the Seekers of Truth.

Isolationists. A small fraternity of mages that advocates seclusion from the rest of the world.

J

Joining. A ritual a recruit must undergo to become a Warden.

June. The ancient elven god of craft. Pronounced "ju-NAY."

Justinian. The sixth month of the Chantry calendar.

K

Kabethari. The Qunari word for conquered people.

Kal-Sharok. A long-lost dwarven thaig under the Hunterhorn Mountains.

keeper. The leader of a Dalish tribe.

Kingsway. The ninth month of the Chantry calendar.

Korcari Wilds. A stretch of treacherous forest and wetlands south of Ferelden.

knife-ear. A derogatory term for an elf.

kossith. An archaic term for a race of large, horned people now known largely as Qunari.

L

Laetan. A mage class in Tevinter whose members have no prior family history of magic use.

Landsmeet. A coming together of disparate groups to tackle a common problem. It took a Landsmeet in Ferelden to bring the nation together against the Fifth Blight.

Legion of the Dead. A famous dwarven military unit made up of disgraced dwarves who dedicate the remainder of their lives to fighting darkspawn for honor's sake.

Libertarians. A fraternity of mages who advocate mage independence.

Litany of Adralla. A spell that protects against blood mages and demonic possession.

Llomerryn. A pirate island off the coast of Rivain.

Llomerryn Accords. Treaties signed by the Qunari and the nations of Thedas, with the exception of Tevinter, to end the Qunari Wars.

Long Walk. The mass migration of the elves to the Dales after they were given the land by Andraste and Maferath.

Loyalists. A large mage fraternity that supports loyalty to the Chantry.

Lucrosians. A mage fraternity that puts the accumulation of wealth before any other political ideology.

Lusacan. The Tevinter Old God known as the Dragon of Night.

lyrium. A rare mineral found underground that is sought after for its magical properties.

M

mabari. A breed of dog prized in Ferelden both on the battlefield and as a companion.

Maferath. The mortal husband and betrayer of the prophet Andraste.

mage. A person who has the power to use magic.

Mage Underground. A group of apostates organized in opposition to the Chantry and the Circle of Magi.

magic. The power to wield the elements and shape reality by forces drawn from the Fade.

magister. A member of the Tevinter Magisterium.

Magisterium. Tevinter's legislative body.

magocracy. Governance by mages.

Maker. The god introduced by the prophet Andraste and worshiped by the Chantry.

maleficar. A mage who practices forbidden magic. The plural form is *maleficarum*.

mana. An essence within a mage that allows him or her to wield magic.

Marcher. A resident of the Free Marches.

Matrinalis. The traditional name for the month of August.

Merchants Guild. The largest single institution of surface dwarves. The guild regulates trade between Orzammar and the surface.

Minanter River. A major river that runs through the Free Marches.

Minrathous. The capital of the Tevinter Imperium.

Molioris. The traditional name for the month of Bloomingtide.

Mortalitasi. An order of Nevarran mages that studies and works with the dead.

mudsplasher. Dwarven slang for a nug.

Mythal. The ancient mother god of the elves, known as the Great Protector.

N

Nevarra. A nation in central Thedas known for its history of royal dynasties and unique traditions regarding death.

Nevarran Accord. The agreement that formally joined the Chantry and the Seekers of Truth, leading to the creation of the Circle of Magi.

New Exalted Marches. A series of Exalted Marches called against the Qunari.

Nubulis. The traditional name for the month of Drakonis.

nug. A hairless, nearly blind creature that lives underground.

O

ogre. One of a massive, horned breed of darkspawn derived from the kossith.

Old God. One of a pantheon of dragon gods worshiped by the ancient Tevinter Imperium.

orichalcum. A metal used for weaponry and armor.

Orlais. A powerful nation in central Thedas known for its extravagance and Chantry influence.

Orzammar. The largest remaining dwarven thaig in Thedas and the center of dwarven leadership.

P

Par Vollen. A jungle nation in northern Thedas now considered by the Qunari to be their homeland.

Paragon. A title of honor given by the dwarves to those they call their "living ancestors" for feats of great importance.

Parvulis. The traditional name for the month of Kingsway.

phylactery. A vial of a mage's blood kept by the Circle. Phylacteries can be used to track mages should they ever try to flee.

Pluitanis. The traditional name for the month of Guardian.

potion. A magical mixture that will grant an ability or cure an ailment.

profane. Another term for a rock wraith.

Q

qalaba. A breed of cow raised by the Qunari.

Quickening. The process of aging and dying that the elves claim plagued them after human contact.

Qun. The religious text followed by the Qunari that teaches a strict set of societal laws.

Qunandar. The capital of Par Vollen and the Qunari people.

Qunari. A follower of the Qun.

Qunari Wars. A series of wars fought between the Qunari and the armies of Thedas.

Qunlat. The language spoken by the Qunari.

R

Raiders of the Waking Sea. A loose association of pirates that operate predominantly on the eastern coast of Thedas.

Razikale. The Tevinter Old God known as the Dragon of Mystery.

red lyrium. An especially potent form of lyrium only recently discovered in the Deep Roads.

revenant. A corpse possessed by a pride demon or a desire demon.

Right of Annulment. The right of the templars to kill all mages in a Circle, used as a last resort to maintain order.

Rite of Tranquility. A ritual where a mage's connection to the Fade is severed. As a side effect, the rite also strips them of any emotions.

Rivain. A coastal nation in eastern Thedas known for its patchwork of cultures.

rogue. A fighter with particular agility and speed, as well as a talent for stealth.

rune. An enchanted stone crafted by the dwarves that can be affixed to an item to give it magical properties.

S

Saarebas. The Qunari word for a mage.

Salasari. The three leaders, or triumvirate, who rule the Qunari.

Satinalia. A holiday named for the second moon, Satina, often accompanied by wild celebration.

Schism. The longstanding rift between the Chantry and Tevinter's Imperial Chantry.

Seekers of Truth. A small, clandestine order within the Chantry that traditionally oversees templar conduct and leads investigations into the most serious matters.

Seheron. An island nation in northern Thedas that has been a battleground for Tevinter and the Qunari for generations.

sending stone. A magical means to communicate over great distances. Messages are sent from stone to stone.

ser. An honorific common among knights and experienced templars.

Shaper. A senior dwarf of high standing tasked with keeping the history of the people.

Shaperate. The organization that archives and studies the history of the dwarves.

shemlen. A term for humans used by elves. A derogatory variant is *shem.*

shriek. One of a breed of darkspawn derived from elves, known for their thin stature and quick movement.

Silent Sisters. A dwarven order of unarmed female warriors dedicated to the Paragon Astyth the Grey. Like Astyth, members cut out their tongues.

silverite. A strong, beautiful metal traditionally used by the dwarves in jewelry, rune making, and weapon smithing.

Sky Cult. Another term for the Avvar barbarians, who believe in a unique pantheon of gods, including the Lady of the Skies.

slaver. Someone who deals in slaves.

smallclothes. Underwear.

smith. A maker of weapons and other tools. The Smith Caste is important in dwarven culture.

Solace. The seventh month of the Chantry calendar.

Solis. The traditional name for the month of Solace.

Soporati. A Tevinter class of non-mages.

spindleweed. A plant said to ease the recovery of the sick.

spirit. An otherworldly being native to the Fade.

Steel Age. The sixth age in the Chantry calendar, named after Queen Madrigal of Antiva was assassinated on a hunt and found with four steel swords plunged into her chest.

Stone. The rock that surrounds the dwarves, spoken of by them as though it is alive. When they die, they are said to return to the Stone.

Stone-blind. A term used by dwarves to describe surface dwarves who have lost their Stone sense.

Stone sense. A dwarf's seemingly natural ability to sense the Stone around them, even in the dark.

Storm Age. The seventh age of the Chantry calendar, named as the organization leaders called for an Exalted March to push back the invading Qunari.

Summerday. A holiday that marks the beginning of summer.

surfacer. A dwarven term for someone who lives aboveground.

Sylaise. An ancient elven god known as the Hearthkeeper.

sylvan. A tree possessed by a spirit.

T

taint. A physical corruption that lingers in all darkspawn. It is the source of the many diseases they spread.

Tal-Vashoth. A one-time member of the Qunari who has rejected the Qun and the Qunari lifestyle.

Tamassran. A powerful Qunari priestess who administers Qun-sanctioned rituals and governs social engineering practices.

Templar Order. The military arm of the Chantry primarily responsible for policing mages and the use of magic.

Tevinter Imperium. A historically powerful, mage-governed nation in northern Thedas.

teyrn. A powerful Fereldan noble who oversees a section of the nation called a teyrnir. The feminine form is *teyrna*.

tezpadam. The dwarven name for the deepstalker.

thaig. A cavern city the dwarves carved out of the rock to house a community. Most were lost in early Blights.

Thedas. The known world.

Thedosian. A person from Thedas.

Tirashan. A large, impenetrable forest at the foot of the Hunterhorn Mountains.

Toth. A Tevinter Old God who awoke as an Archdemon to lead the Third Blight. Also known as the Dragon of Fire.

Towers Age. The third age in the Chantry calendar, named for the two towers of the new Grand Cathedral in Val Royeaux.

Tranquil. A mage who has lost his or her connection to the Fade, as well as all emotion, after undergoing the Rite of Tranquility.

Tree of the People. See **vhenadahl**.

U

Umbralis. The traditional name for the month of Firstfall.

Urn of Sacred Ashes. The urn said to hold the ashes of the prophet Andraste.

Urthemiel. The Tevinter Old God of beauty who awoke as a blighted high dragon, setting in motion the Fifth Blight.

uthenera. The elven concept of "the long sleep." When the elves were immortal, elders would retire to slumber for generations when they became weary of life.

V

Val Royeaux. The capital of Orlais.

vallaslin. Dalish face tattoos, roughly translated as "blood writing."

Veil. That which separates the Fade from the waking world. It prevents anything physical from entering the Fade.

Verimensis. The traditional name for the month of Wintermarch.

vhenadahl. An elven tree said to grow in every alienage, meant to represent Arlathan. Also called "Tree of the People."

viddathari. A new convert to the Qun.

viddathlok. A Qunari temple.

Vimmark Mountains. A mountain range along the northern coast of the Waking Sea.

viscount. The head of state in Kirkwall.

Void. The Chantry concept of life after death if one has not found favor with the Maker.

W

Waking Sea. A sea that cuts into the heart of Thedas, serving as a major naval trade route.

waking world. A term often used to describe Thedas when compared to the spirit world of the Fade.

Weisshaupt. A fortress in the Anderfels and the center of Grey Warden leadership.

werewolf. A feral, humanoid wolf that factors heavily in Fereldan lore.

Western Approach. A large, arid expanse in southwestern Orlais.

White Spire. The Circle Tower of Val Royeaux and one of the city's most notable landmarks.

Wintermarch. The first month of the Chantry calendar.

Wintersend. A holiday that celebrates the Maker and marks the end of winter.

wisp. A weak spirit.

wraith. A kind of spirit that is often malicious.

wyvern. A solitary, aggressive cousin of the dragon.

Z

Zazikel. The Tevinter Old God who awoke corrupted to spur the Second Blight. Also known as the Dragon of Chaos.

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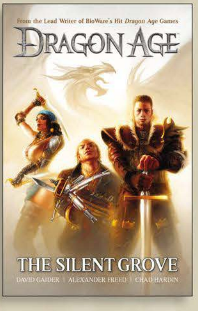

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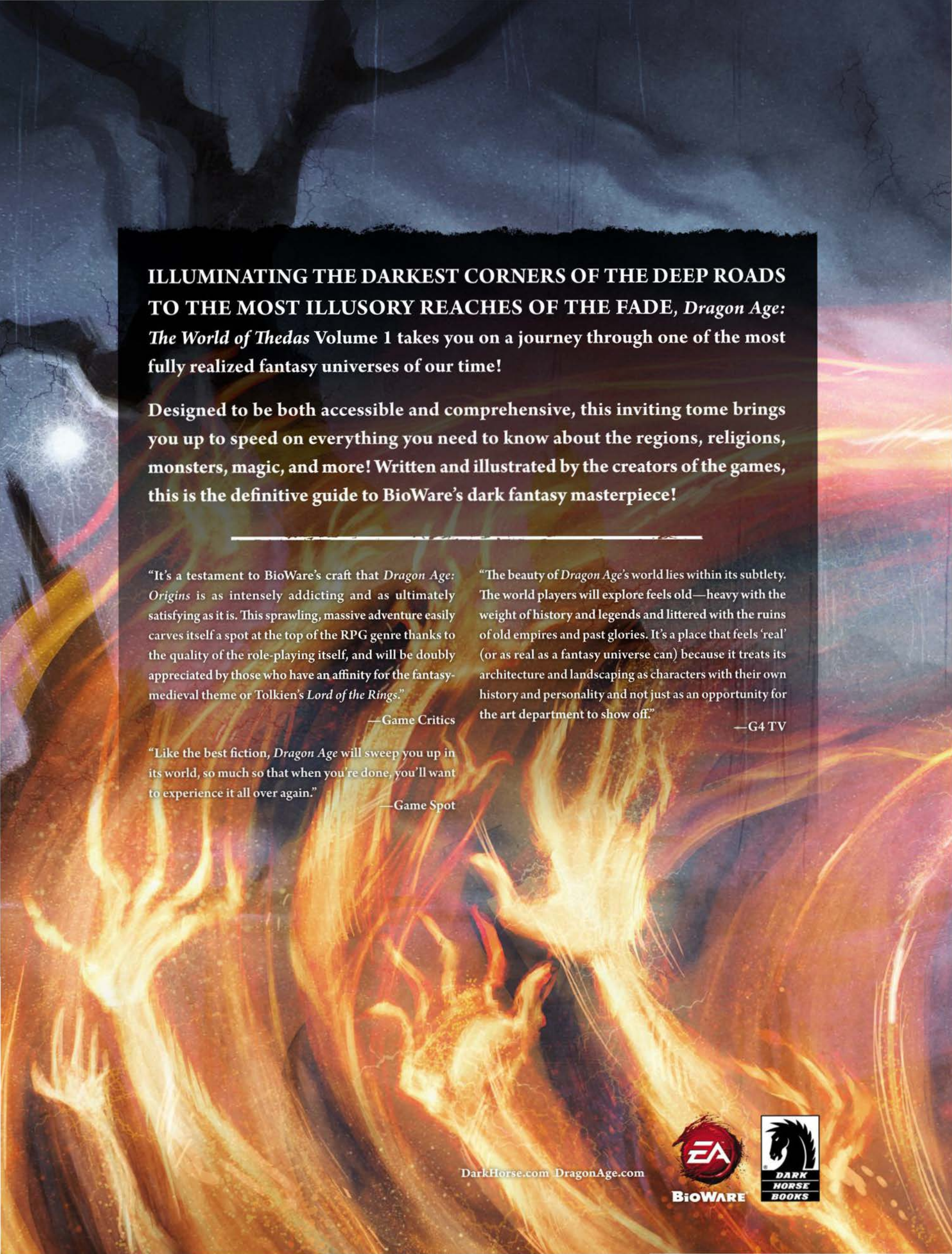

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